1984

Manipur in Transition: Differentials of Development in a Polyethnic Area of India.

Kiran Banga Chhokar
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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MANIPUR IN TRANSITION: DIFFERENTIALS OF DEVELOPMENT
IN A POLYETHNIC AREA OF INDIA

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by
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December 1984
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ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to investigate the processes of socio-economic change that have affected the major ethnic groups in Manipur, mainly the subsistence level tribals and the Meitei peasantry; the strategies adopted by these groups, and individuals within the groups, to cope with the changed environment; and the spatial expression of these processes of change in varying patterns of development.

Manipur, a polyethnic state in northeastern India, is currently the scene of hostilities among the different ethnic groups. The study tests the hypothesis that the underlying cause of these conflicts is the difference in the levels of development of the three major ethnic groups, the tribal, the Meitei, and the Nepali immigrants, and their differential access to scarce resources.

This meso-level investigation focuses on a one-third sample of all villages in Manipur. The study is based on published Census data, supplemented by field work. Spatial variations in the levels of development, mapped and described using simple statistical and cartographic techniques, reveal a distinct disparity between the hills and the valley of Manipur. Since these two physiographic units correspond with the two ethnic groups, the tribal and the Meitei, these regional differences also reflect ethnic differences.

These differences are further substantiated using multivariate statistical techniques. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) reveals that, on the basis of the selected indicators of
development, significant differences exist among the tribals, Meiteis, and Nepalis. The subsequent procedure of discriminant analysis used to identify how the selected variables combine to distinguish one group from the other, also highlights the differences in the levels of development of the three groups.

Population pressure, accessibility, and geographical proximity to an urban center appear to be important factors in determining the intensity of change. The four clusters of development identified in Manipur: in the Manipur valley, in the Khuga valley, in the northern foothills along the Dimapur-Imphal highway, and in Jiribam, all share these three attributes.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is about geographic patterns and processes of socio-economic change in Manipur, a small, ethnically diverse state in northeast India. Manipur is an area long neglected by scholars and administrators alike, but one that cannot be ignored any longer. Political events of the past decade, expressed in interethnic hostilities culminating in terrorism have brought this small state to the notice of the country. The reason for the past neglect is not only the location of Manipur on the periphery of the Indian political space, but also its peripheral location in relation to the Indian cultural space.

The northeastern region of India of which Manipur is a part is tenuously linked to the Indian mainland by a narrow corridor lying between the northwestern tip of Bangladesh and the southeastern corner of Nepal (Fig. 1.1). The region is composed of the Brahmaputra valley (also known as the Assam valley) and the mountain

\[1\] This region also contains the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, and Sikkim. These two political units are, however, not considered a part of the region conceived of as the northeast politically and culturally. Darjeeling was well integrated with the undivided Bengal of British India, and is still adequately connected with the Indian state of West Bengal. Sikkim, now an Indian state, was earlier an independent kingdom with a status similar to that of Bhutan.
Figure 1.1 Northeast India
rim wrapped around it. The rugged rim is a part of the Himalayan mountain system and its southern offshoot, the Indo-Burmese mountain system.

The northern Himalayan mountain rim, with its eastern and western extensions, has imparted the identity of a subcontinent to the cultural region called India. High passes in the mountain wall have served as important gateways into the subcontinent. The major incursions of migrants and invaders have been through the northwest. Although lacking major passes, such as the Khyber, gaps and traverse valleys at the eastern extremity of this mountain region, allowed migrants from southeast Asia to enter and spread through the northeastern region. These migrations are responsible for the existence of the Mongoloid strain in the population of northeastern India, Bhutan, and Nepal, and traces of these people are also discernible in Bangladesh and West Bengal. Displacement of population to the east and the south caused by incursions from the northwest provided resistance to encroachments from the east and northeast and checked a wider diffusion of the Mongoloid influence.

For many reasons, geographic and historical, the northeast portion of India is distinct from the subcontinent at large. The major center of the development and diffusion of the Indic culture, which is a blend of the Hindu and the Indo-Islamic, has always been the western half of the Gangetic plain, the region that Basham (1954:2) called the "heart of India." In this region, Hinduism evolved, Buddhism was born, and Islam was first resisted, though later certain elements of this alien religion were absorbed within
the existing culture while Islam acquired a local flavor. This region is India's Indo-Aryan core. A secondary Indic core, the Dravidian, lies in southeastern India (Fig. 1.2).

The concept of "core" is important in the study of cultural space (Meinig 1965; Sopher 1980a). According to Sopher (1980a:291):

...'core areas' are those in which religious movements arise or take hold, where ferment occurs, where new techniques that are deemed valuable become established, and where economic and political interaction appear to be most concentrated and intense.

These "core areas," which are the equivalent of Spate's (1954) "perennial nuclear regions," are always located in areas of high agricultural productivity, often at nodes of communication routes and commerce. Sopher's (1980a:291) map of South Asia's persistent cultural-political regions and cores that existed before the expansion of British power places the mountain areas of northeast India lay outside the Indian cultural-political realm. India, as it exists today, was created from the British Indian Empire which was a much larger political entity than that which existed before the British occupation.²

That India's northeastern region was not considered a part of India as late as the first half of the nineteenth century is borne out by the fact that Rajah Rammohun Roy, a well known Bengali intellectual of the period, in his delimitation of India wrote that

²The British, while expanding their control from their littoral base in Bengal toward the interior or the Indian heartland, ignored the northeastern region despite its proximity until the 1820's when this frontier region was threatened by repeated invasions of the increasingly emboldened Burmese imperialists.
Figure 1.2 Dominant Culture Cores of India and Migration Routes
it was bound on the east partly by sea, "and partly by ranges of mountains separating it from the ancient China, or rather the countries now called Assam, Cassay and Arracan" (Roy 1832:v). He, thereby, relegated Assam (the name "Assam" here encompasses the entire northeastern region) to the same status of peripherality, or rather externality, as Burma.

Although outside the Indian macro-region, the northeastern region, especially the Brahmaputra valley, has been an important node of migration routes between India and southeast Asia (Phayre 1883; Choudhury 1966). The powerful Ahoms, who ruled the Brahmaputra valley for several centuries, were Shans from Upper Burma who probably crossed over through the Patkai passes (Dalton 1872). The first Ahom king who conquered the region around A.D. 1228, assumed the name Ahom, or "peerless," for himself and his people. The present name Asam or Assam is believed to be a corruption of Ahom.3 Even though the Ahoms were soon Hinduized by reformist Hindu missionaries from Bengal, "Assam" according to Spate (1957:150) "remained mleccha --foreign beyond the pale, unsubjugated even by Mughals." Barun De (1967:50) considered Assam as a marchland in the context of the "main streams of traditional culture in India." Since the hill areas of the northeast were even more inaccessible from the

3Waddell (1901:10) believed that "the 'h' in 'Ahom' became softened according to local usage to 's' and thus 'Ahom' became 'Asom' which is still the current phonetic form ... though it is spelt in the vernacular 'Asam' which in our maps is reduced to 'Assam.'"
Indian heartland, and thus from the cultural streams, they formed the periphery of the periphery.

In their organization of Indian space, most geographers and other social scientists have neglected the northeastern region. Many emphasize the traditional dichotomy between an Indo-Aryan north and a Dravidian south (Ginsburg 1958; Mandelbaum 1970; Sopher 1980a). Mandelbaum, however, preferred a quadripartition of Indian space to account for the fuzzy areas in the east and the west which clearly belong to neither the north nor the south. His east includes Assam, but whether it also includes the hill areas of the northeast is uncertain. Mandelbaum's scheme closely corresponds with Berry's (1966) four fold regionalization of Indian economy, with each region organized around one of the four major metropolises: New Delhi, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Cohn (1967) demonstrated the existence of an east-west dichotomy in his analysis of the distribution of certain artifacts, and suggested two alternate, overlapping cultural dichotomies, one north-south and the other east-west. Sopher (1980a) proposed that while the north-south dichotomy is valid in the distribution of features of the social structure such as status of women and marriage customs, there also exists an east-west contrast related mainly to environmental and environment dependent variables such as intensity of rainfall and the dominance of rice in the cropping pattern. Since many of the social and cultural factors are related to environmental variables, the subcontinent, according to Sopher, really lies astride this dual gradient. In Sopher's (1980a:325) analysis of Indian space based on interrelated ecological variables,
the northeast emerges as part of the "east," but he does not mention the region in his discussion of regional differences.

In fact, the entire mountain rim of India has been largely ignored by geographers. Except for a few studies such as the morphogenesis of settlement pattern in the Sivaliks (Mukerji 1976), ecology and tourism potential of the Garhwal Himalayas (Tejvir Singh, forthcoming), organization of religious and political space in Ladakh (Harjit Singh 1977), nomadism in Uttarkhand and Kumaons (Bose 1960), and agriculture and geoeconomy in the Kumaons, Nepal, and the Himalayas in general (Andress 1972; Bishop 1978; Hoffpauir 1978; Uhlig 1976, 1978), the rest of the region, particularly the northeast, awaits attention. So far, the only geographical studies published on Manipur, for example, have been descriptive accounts of its physical landscape and its economic geography (Ansari 1975, 1976a, 1976b; R. P. Singh 1976). The present study is a step in the direction of filling this lacuna in the cultural geography of India.

Anthropologists' interest in other parts of the country has been stronger. Mandelbaum's map (1970, inside cover) of location of some of the important micro studies carried out in India reveals a blank area in India's northeast. The two anthropologists who have contributed significantly to the ethnography of this neglected area are Elwin (1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961) and Fürer-Haimendorf (1939, 1946, 1947, 1956, 1962, 1969, 1976, 1980, 1982). Both of them, however, concerned themselves mainly with groups inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh (formerly the North East Frontier Agency, or NEFA) and Nagaland. During the past two decades, Roy Burman has published
extensively on the northeast region including the voluminous *Demographic and Socio Economic Profiles of the Hill Areas of North-East India* (1970), which is a mine of information. Most of his work, however, constitutes "brief surveys" and "rapid appraisals" which lack focus and depth. The most substantive studies of the region available are those conducted in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries by British administrators and soldiers who wrote extensively about this new frontier region of the British Indian Empire.

The hill areas of northeast India are inhabited mainly by peoples of the Indo-Chinese subgroup of the Mongoloid race, and the Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1903). These dominantly non-Hinduized shifting cultivators are more akin to the peoples of southeast Asia than to those of the rest of India. Because of sparse archaeological and historical research, we know little about the approximate date and sequence of settlement in the region, but some historians and historical geographers maintain that the "Kiratas" mentioned in the Vedas as early as 1000 B.C. were the Indo-Mongoloids of northeast India (Chatterji 1950; Chaudhuri 1955: map).

The hill peoples of northeast India have been referred to as "tribal" in official and academic literature. "Tribe" is a very nebulous term, generally applied to people considered "primitive," but its meaning has been a subject of great controversy (Mednick 1960; Tax 1960; Hsu 1964; Fried 1966; Helm 1968; Ghurye 1980). Despite all the debate, no single universally acceptable definition
has as yet emerged. Most attempts at defining the concept, however, rest on the premise that human society, as a rule, moves from simpler to more complex forms, and the "tribal" is thus considered to be the relatively less complex form of human society. In one of the most comprehensive treatments of the concept, Sahlins (1968) considered all facets of tribal life: technology, economy, social and political organization, and religion, not as different institutions, but rather as different functions of the same institution. He stressed the generalized nature of the tribal structure in which, he claimed, lies its primitiveness. In the Indian context, an important distinctive feature of tribal society has been its place outside the caste structure of the Indic society. Anthropologists tend to adopt a continuum approach in the study of tribes in India according to which tribe and caste and tribe and peasant are seen as opposite ends of a single line (Bailey 1960; Sinha 1965).

Tribe, in India, is also an administrative category. The Indian Constitution requires that tribal groups be identified and granted special privileges to raise the social and economic standards of these "backward" communities, and give them their rightful place

4 There are some who insist that any group which an anthropologist considers to be a tribe, is a tribe. Yengoyan (1968: 187-188), for example, claimed that "since the majority of trained anthropological and field workers as well as other observers have presented demographic and cultural data under this or that ... tribe, the problem of defining a tribe to fit all particular cases is not necessary."
in the secular and democratic Indian society.\(^5\) The Census department follows the official schedule of "tribes" for the purpose of enumeration. According to the Indian census of 1971, almost 7 percent of India's population belonged to the tribal category, of which nearly 11 percent inhabit the northeastern hills. The major concentration of tribals, however, is in central India. The rest are clustered in parts of the arid region of western India, along the Himalayan foothills, and in parts of southern India.

Subbarao (1956) pointed out the peculiar tendency of tribals in India to cluster, by and large, in areas that are either hilly, thickly forested, or arid, all of which provide environmental settings that are not conducive for settled agriculture at the level of technology that they possess. This popular notion was statistically tested by Raza et al. (1976), who worked out the concentration of tribal population in relation to area under forest and net

\(^5\)The Constitution, however, does not define the term "tribe" and so the decision to declare a group a "scheduled tribe" often has a political rather than a scientific basis. This leads to some anomalous situations such as that of the transhumant Gujars who, until recently, were considered a tribe as long as they were in Himachal Pradesh but lost their tribal status when they descended into the Jammu plains every winter because they were not designated as a tribe in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. There is also the problem of the Sanskritized tribes, who have been in contact with caste society for so long that they are culturally not very different from their non-tribal neighbors. They might, thus, escape identification as a deprived and exploited group in need of special protection or privileges unless they have a politically powerful spokesman to plead their cause. In northeast India, especially in states other than Assam and Tripura, the problem of assimilated or Hinduized tribes does not exist because the tribes are mainly the hill dwellers who are quite distinct from the Hinduized peasants of the plains.
sown area. The results of their study indicate a positive correlation of tribal concentration with forested area, and a negative correlation with net sown area, thus proving true the hypothesis that tribals in India are largely confined to areas unsuitable for settled agriculture.

This peculiar pattern of distribution of the tribal peoples may be explained in two ways. First, the tribals are the indigenous population of the areas where they are concentrated; those segments of the population which moved out and came in contact with groups possessing higher technological knowledge were transformed and absorbed to varying degrees within the larger alien groups. Second, they were pushed into their present habitats by later waves of immigrants who were often militarily superior and wrested the more favorable lands from these earlier groups and pushed them into less favorable areas. Alternatively, to escape the later invaders, the earlier settlers who form the tribal groups of today, moved into these refuge areas.

In the Indian context, the second hypothesis seems more plausible. The present pattern of the distribution of population is a result of the struggle between successive waves of immigrants to acquire the agriculturally favorable areas, which are the fertile

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6Oppert (1893:v) was of the view that "the favoured spots in which, in primeval periods men preferred to select their dwellings, were the highlands, hills and mountains; for these regions afforded greater protection not from only the attacks of men and of wild beasts, but also against the fury of the unfettered elements, especially against the ravages of sudden and disastrous inundations. Though the plains were not altogether uninhabited, still the bulk of population preferred, where obtainable, the higher and more secure places."
river valleys. During this period, the earlier settlers were pushed first into less attractive areas, and later into even more unfavorable pockets where they remained relatively undisturbed until the present. It was only very recently that substantial inroads began to be made into tribal areas, mainly because of a growing awareness of their resource potential. It is, therefore, not out of preference that the tribal groups live in these agriculturally negative areas; rather their present distribution is a result of historical circumstance.

Subbarao (1956:6) described the pattern of development of material culture in India "as one of the horizontal expansion of the higher cultures, leading to a displacement, contraction, and isolation of the lower cultures, in different parts of the country, at different periods, and at different cultural levels." The fertile river valleys of India with their regular and abundant water supply, which were penetrated and exploited by large agricultural communities, are interspersed with several forested mountains, stony plateaus, arid tracts, and other such refuge areas where the militarily weaker earlier populations are believed to have been driven. There they have survived till the present. As Führer-

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7 In this context Risley (1915:3-4) wrote, "An unbroken chain of snowclad peaks and of passes only practicable at certain seasons opposes an effectual obstacle to the fusion of contrasting types [of human population]. Ranges of lower elevation, intersected by frequent valleys, form no bar to hostile incursions and yield but scanty protection to a weaker race. Long stretches of fertile plain, traversed by navigable rivers and lying open to the marches of armies lend themselves to crushing out of racial distinctions which conquest
Haimendorf (1948:87) put it,

it is a phenomenon peculiar to India, that throughout the ages great civilizations have arisen without obliterating or absorbing all that has gone before: the older and more static cultures gave way not by disintegrating but by seeking refuge in remote areas, uncongenial to civilization based on advanced agricultural economy.

What is true for India as a whole is also true for its north-eastern region. The nontribal component of the population of the region is concentrated mainly in the fertile Brahmaputra valley, the Manipur valley, and the plains of Tripura. The tribal component, on the other hand, which accounts for a little less than a fifth of the total population of this region, occupies a far more extensive but much less favorable habitat in the surrounding hills. The rugged topography of the thickly forested hills, with the many narrow intervening valleys, served to isolate and differentiate the several indigenous groups of people.

The Brahmaputra valley received immigrants from both the east and the west, and the settlers developed into a peasant society and came under the influence of Hinduism several centuries ago. Tripura, both physiographically and culturally, is really a part of Bengal. The plains of Tripura are a part of the Ganges delta region. The hills that form its eastern edge are a continuation of the Mizo/Lushai and the Chittagong hills. As a result of its non-inclusion in the Muslim Bengali state of Pakistan, now Bangladesh, brings in its train. Isolated hill ranges and lofty plateaus, guarded by fever haunted forests and offering no prospect of profit or plunder furnish an abiding refuge for tribes which are compact enough to emigrate en masse."
because of the dominance of a Hindu population, this outlier became a part of India's northeastern region.

Manipur, which lies in the Indo-Burmese mountain system and forms the focus of the present study, consists of two distinct physiographic units: an elliptical valley, which is settled by a peasant society, surrounded by hills which are the home of the various tribal groups. The British had classified the population of Manipur mainly on the basis of linguistic affinities, into three broad groups: Naga, Kuki, and Meitei (Grierson 1903, 1904). Whereas the Naga and Kuki categories encompassed all the tribal groups living in the hills, the term Meitei referred to the Hinduized peasants of the valley who were politically organized under a Raja or a king. The arrivals of the Naga and the Meitei groups in Manipur are believed to have been roughly contemporaneous, although which of the two arrived first is a matter of controversy. The Meitei are believed to have been living in the valley for over two thousand years (Roy 1958). The Meitei royal chronicle, Cheitharol Kumbaba, starts with events occurring during the reign of Pakhangba, the first historical king of the Meiteis, who ruled sometime between A.D. 33 and 156. The Kangabalon, an account of legendary kings of Manipur, deals with events dating from 500 B.C.

A lack of adequate historical and archaeological evidence makes it difficult to verify the extant traditions which claim that the Meitei are the indigenous people of the valley. Nor is it possible to ascertain whether it was because they possessed superior technological skills that they were able to establish themselves in
the valley by pushing earlier settlers, if any, into the hills, or whether they achieved a higher level of agricultural development compared with the settlers in the hills because of a more favorable habitat.

The entire Indo-Burmese mountain region belongs to the Southeast Asian cultural realm and so did the Manipur valley until the 18th century, when the Meitei king and his subjects were converted to Hinduism by a Vaishnavite missionary from Bengal. Since then the Manipur valley has been, to use Meinig's (1965) terminology, a sphere, an enclave of Hindus among a dominantly non-Hindu population. Schwartzberg (1967a:102-111), in his classification of the cultural regions of South Asia, identified this intermontane valley as being transitional from Indic to Southeast Asian cultural realm, whereas the surrounding tribal regions, which he termed the "Northeast Frontier Tribal," he considered a subsection of the Southeast Asian cultural realm.

In addition to the inherent differences bestowed on the two groups by their adaptation to different ecological habitats, the "highland" tribals and the "lowland" Meiteis are also culturally distinct. Most tribal groups in other parts of India display, in varying degree, elements of cultural continuity with the majority groups of the region. Srinivas (1966) termed the process by which tribes (and low castes) adopt the customs, beliefs, lifestyle, and ideology of the higher castes as "Sanskritization." This process has occurred to some degree along the margins of the northeastern tribal region--among some of the tribes of Tripura and the tribes in
the foothills around the Brahmaputra valley. A similar process, however, did not occur in Manipur, despite long association between the Meiteis and some of the neighboring tribal groups, because their relations predated the Hinduization of the Meiteis, and also because the Indic element in Manipur, perhaps, was not a strong enough centripetal force owing to its outlying location within a dominantly tribal region. The Meitei and the tribals of the Manipur hills have, thus, remained culturally distinct.

Although the confusion and change caused by the processes of assimilation and Sanskritization do not exist in Manipur, other change inducing processes have been at work. These include factors such as the extension of colonialism, wars, proselytizing by Christian missionaries, an expanding communication network, arrival of immigrants from other parts of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, and in recent years, activities of development extension agencies and the involvement of the people in the political process of the state and the country. All these processes, and more, in conjunction with the pressure of a rapidly growing population on available resources, have resulted in extensive changes in the physical and cultural environment of all the ethnic groups inhabiting Manipur.

This study is primarily concerned with the different processes that have brought about changes in the physico-cultural environment of the different ethnic groups and the adaptive or maladaptive strategies adopted by these groups, and individuals within the groups, to cope with the changes. Brookfield (1975:xi) used the term "development" to refer to "the whole process of change brought
about by the creation and expansion of an interdependent world system." I have used the term to refer to the whole process of change at a lower level of an interdependent system comprised of ethnic, economic, demographic, political, social, cultural, and environmental components in a small state of the Indian union. The study is also concerned with the emerging spatial patterns that reflect this process of development. The approach adopted here to study change is, thus, concerned both with process and with location.

Whereas ecological analysis is concerned with the interaction of factors within the man-environment system at a particular location, and the regulatory mechanism which responds to change by rearranging and restructuring social and ecological relationships within the system (Clarke 1971; Nietschmann 1973), spatial analysis is concerned with factors affecting the location of specific ecologically defined activities. Or, as Clarkson (1970:706) put it, "Locational analysis, in a sense, begins where ecological analysis leaves off--it takes the system investigated in ecologic analysis as given and goes to relate it to location." The difference in the focus of the two approaches is partly related to the scale of investigation. Whereas ecological studies are essentially micro-level studies, spatial analysis is most often carried out at the macro-level. An ecological study, because it demands a detailed understanding of the complex relationships between man and environment, or the "inner workings of systems" (Brookfield 1973), must necessarily be conducted at the micro level. Such studies are generally restricted to small subsistence or near-subsistence groups because of
the higher degree of direct observable interaction between such groups and their environments (Clarke 1971; Waddell 1972; Nietschmann 1973; Grossman 1981). Spatial analysis, on the other hand, is mostly concerned with macro-level studies of complex and industrial societies, or with "those aspects of other types of societies which are specifically commercial in nature" (Clarkson 1970:716).

Although Brookfield (1973) demonstrated that this dichotomy of methodological approaches is not necessarily antithetical, the tendency of geographers to neglect the expanse between the two ends of the continuum with micro-level ecological analysis at one end and macro-level spatial analysis at the other led Spate (1973:vi) to lament "why, oh why, do we always think and speak of micro and macro, and disregard the infinite possibilities of the meso?"

The present study is a meso-level investigation of the processes of change that have affected the major ethnic groups in Manipur, mainly the subsistence level tribals and the Meitei peasantry; the strategies of readapting to their changed environments that these groups, and individuals within the groups, have adopted; and the ways the different phenomena have combined in space to form distinct patterns reflecting the paths of diffusion of external stimuli, and the areas of innovation acceptance and cultural adaptation. A further question is whether the differences between the levels of development of the different groups are increasing or decreasing. The study focuses on 752 of the 1,960 settled villages in the hills and the valley of Manipur inhabited by different ethnic groups. Since acquisition of data in the field at this scale is
beyond the logistic capability of a single individual, the study is based on published census data, which have been supplemented by field observations.

My interest in this remote and exotic part of India was first aroused during a visit there in 1976. I subsequently visited Manipur twice more and gathered information mainly on ethnicity. By October 1979, when I last visited Manipur, the political situation in the state had deteriorated considerably and terrorism was widespread on the streets of Imphal, the state capital, and in the countryside. Army troops have since been brought in and visits by outsiders restricted. Despite the passage of five years, the situation has not improved much and subsequent visits to the field were, thus, ruled out. Because of this constraint, the aspects of development focused on are largely determined by the nature of the census data. Census data published for individual villages can be grouped under the categories of occupational structure, land use, literacy, and infrastructural amenities. Indicators of development were extracted from these major categories, and the patterns of development determined. I have attempted to relate these patterns to the distribution of ethnic groups. I have then sought to understand the resulting patterns of differential development in the context of man-environment relationships.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the concept of development in terms of how it has been dealt with in geographical literature, and in the sense that I have used it in this study. The methodology adopted for the study of the differentials of development is also outlined.
Chapter 3 deals with the concept of ethnicity and the distribution of ethnic groups in Manipur, and reconstructs the possible sequence of settlement of the state. The background of the rising sense of ethnicity reflected in the assertion of one's ethnic identity and expressed in hostilities against other ethnic groups is also explored. The hypothesis that interethnic hostilities are a result of perceived threats by other groups to one's socio-economic well being is explored in Chapter 4, which describes the "development" surface of the state and discusses the differences in levels of development or modernization in terms of some of the social, economic, political, and historical processes. The results of the statistical analyses performed to determine the exact nature of social and economic differences among the different ethnic groups are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of the study.
The differences in the levels of development in different areas and among different ethnic groups in Manipur is a major concern of this study. It seeks to understand the processes involved in the emergence, existence, reduction, or intensification of the inequalities in space, which form the basis of development studies. This chapter focuses on the concept of development in general, and how it has been used to study the process of change in Manipur. The methodology adopted to study the patterns and processes and differentials of development is also discussed.

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is viewed both as a state and a process with a goal. Dickinson (1978:83), for example, conceived of development as a "state or goal defined by a cultural group or nation." As a process, development is viewed as the progress toward this state or complex of mainly welfare goals that are believed to constitute that state (Brookfield 1975:xi), or as "the movement of a society from State A to State B where State B is judged to be better than State A by some criterion of value" (Dore 1977:9). This idea of a positive qualitative change is also implicit in Myrdal's (1968:1868) definition of development as "the movement of the whole social system upwards."
De Souza and Porter (1974) stressed the notions of quality of life and freedom from hunger as being essential elements of the concept of development. The forces of change which lead to a breakdown of the established way of life, however, do not necessarily replace it with a better one. Poggie and Lynch (1974:8) pointed out that many of the previously semi-autonomous "folk societies" face net losses of "economic independence, adequate nutrition, social freedom from bureaucratic coercion" as a result of this process of change. As a process, it assumes numerous forms which yield poverty and deprivation as well as wealth and growth (Brookfield 1975). Development, therefore, is a multifaceted process, with both positive and negative effects and is thus not all beneficial (Clarke 1973).

Development has both a temporal and a spatial dimension (Brookfield 1973, 1975). It deals with the process of change over time and over space and the resulting patterns both in space and in time. Because of the idea of motion and change underlying the concept, no human group, society, or country can be considered truly developed, rather all are developing (Dickinson 1978). In geography, the major approaches to the study of development as a process are derived from the diffusion paradigm.

Howlett (1973) introduced the concept of terminal or arrested development beyond which a society may be unable to advance. In her study of the Goroka tribesmen of Papua New Guinea, Howlett demonstrates how the people reached a certain level of development as a result of the introduction of the policy of economic development introduced by the Australian administration, but as a result of the weaknesses of the policy, that level has become a state of "terminal development," or an "infinite pause" in their supposed transition to a higher state of development.
The Diffusion Paradigm

Gould (1964) suggested that development should be viewed as a process of spatial diffusion. Put very simply, ideas and innovations are believed to diffuse from their centers of origin, and their adoption leads to development. According to Soja and Tobin (1975: 198-199) spatial development can be viewed as

...a consequence of innovation diffusion in which values, attitudes, and material attributes of 'modernity' are spatially disseminated through a population; differentially adopted; and eventually incorporated within a territorially defined social system as a primary basis for social, economic, political, and cultural organization.

During the past two decades geographers have sought to describe, explain, and understand the spatial manifestations of unequal development with perspectives derived from the diffusion paradigm (L. A. Brown 1968, 1981; Browett 1980).

The concern with the transition from tradition to modernity through the contemporary forces of societal change gave rise to the "geography of modernization" (Soja and Tobin 1975; Mabogunje 1981). Modernization is viewed as a process of spatial diffusion of modern forms replacing traditional modes and institutions, and assuming

2 Friedmann (1972:87) defined tradition as "simply that which, at any given moment, is established and with respect to which an innovation is defined." Modernity, on the other hand, has been defined as "a relative term referring to a cluster of associated innovations which, at a given point in time, represents a predominant and expanding paradigm for societal organization" (Soja 1973:171).
patterns of varying intensity (Riddell 1970). Studies concerned with the geography of modernization focus on the description of the areal incidence of development and the explanation of the evolution of the observed pattern and its implications in the process of nation building because such works are largely macro-level studies of nations. Some of the earliest and more important ones include Soja's (1968) geography of modernization of Kenya, Gould's (1970) study of Tanzania, and Riddell's (1970) of Sierra Leone. There is a strong emphasis on quantitative methods, especially the principal components analysis of data reflecting the infrastructural elements of modernization such as roads, schools, hospitals, post offices, and other measures with a strong urban bias. The spatial variations in the levels of development derived from such analyses are mapped to

The two terms "modernization" and "development" are often used interchangeably. Eisenstadt (1966) pointed out that historically modernization has been the process of change towards the adoption of the social, economic and political systems developed in Western Europe and North America, or the "developed" world. Similarly Galbraith (1965:3) defined development as "the faithful imitation of the developed." Some believe that modernization is a part of the development process or that it leads to development (Adams 1974; Pogge and Lynch 1974), others believe that development is a part of the modernization process. Lerner (1968:387), for example, claimed that "Modernization is the process of social change in which development is the economic component." Seers (1969:2) considered this tendency of confusing development with economic development and economic development with economic growth, very "slipshod" but "understandable" since it is generally believed that increases in income levels, if faster than population growth, would eventually lead to the solution of all social and political problems. This popular notion, however, is not necessarily true. In much of diffusionist paradigm literature, "development" is generally seen as a static condition whereas "growth" is seen as the process leading to an improvement in that condition (Browett 1980).
depict the modernization surfaces of the area under investigation (Riddell 1970; Soja and Tobin 1975).

Another aspect of development studies which marginally preceded the geography of modernization and caught the interest of economists and geographers was regional development; or, the processes affecting the organization of space especially through the diffusion of innovations over space and the development of urban systems within specified areas of the world (Johnson 1965, 1970; Friedmann 1966; Berry 1969; Hermansen 1969). The purpose of these studies was to suggest strategies for improved urban and regional planning based on their analyses of the processes involved in the emergence of the observed patterns of development.

The significance of innovation diffusion in development is central to development and modernization studies and the process of diffusion has been explained with the help of related concepts such as growth poles, central places, and cores and peripheries. The introduction of the concept of growth pole is attributed to Perroux, who observed that

...growth does not appear everywhere at the same time; it manifests itself in points or 'poles' of growth, with variable intensities; it spreads by different channels and with variable terminal effects for the economy as a whole (Perroux 1955, quoted in Brookfield 1975:91).

Myrdal (1957) who believed that underdevelopment was a concomitant of development, explained the emergence of the two states through the introduction of the concepts of "spread" and "backwash" effects to those of polarized growth and development. Whereas the "spread" of innovations out from the pole encouraged development in
its area of influence, "backwash" effects led to a reverse flow of resources and skills from its hinterland, thereby amplifying existing inequalities.

In his review of development poles and related theories, Hermansen (1972) tried to fuse the central-place theories of Christaller and Lösch with Hagerstrand's (1965, 1967) theory of innovation diffusion to explain the process of the spatial transmission of development. The concepts that became and continue to be specially popular in geographical literature on development and modernization, however, are those of core and periphery introduced by Friedmann (1972). He called the major areas of innovation change "cores", and all other areas within the given spatial system as the "peripheries". Or,

More precisely, core regions are territorially organized subsystems of society that have a high capacity for innovative change; peripheral regions are subsystems whose development path is determined chiefly by core region institutions with respect to which they stand in relation of substantial dependency. Peripheral regions can be defined by their relations of dependency to a core area (Friedmann, 1972:93).

The concept of core and periphery here is, thus, similar to that envisaged by Meinig (1965), Sopher (1980), and others for the process of cultural diffusion. Cores are the dynamic centers where most changes, cultural, economic, and political, occur. Impulses of change and ferment then diffuse through the hinterland, or the area of influence, peripheral to the core. Friedmann stressed the relations between the cores and the peripheries, in which the peripheral areas become increasingly dependent on the cores as markets, sources
of supplies, and administrative centers. The polarization of development in the cores, acts as a major driving force for further development, some of which influences the periphery through the "spread effect" but the predominant response in the interaction is the "backwash effect" from the periphery to the core. Although there is some development in the peripheral areas as a result of transmission of ripples of innovation from the core, the pace of development in the core region outstrips that in the periphery, thereby magnifying the discrepancy in their levels of development. Systems of core-periphery are believed to occur in nested hierarchies from the world level down, with smaller core-periphery regions forming parts of the periphery of the higher order core-periphery regions. Innovation is greater in the cores of the higher order systems than in the cores at the lower levels of the hierarchy (Brookfield 1975).

These concepts of polarized development, central places and core-periphery were also inducted into the geography of modernization. Gould (1970) pointed out the system of nodes and linkages structuring human interaction and development in space. Soja (1968) and Riddell (1970) identified the centers of development and the spatial structure of core-periphery relations in their studies of the modernization surfaces of Kenya and Sierra Leone respectively. In a similar study, Harvey (1972), too, identified the development regions of Sierra Leone.

The diffusion paradigm which seems theoretically sound does not, however, hold up in the real world. Jansen (1970) pointed out
that in societies lacking well integrated physical infrastructure, innovations in cores will not necessarily lead to modernization in the periphery. Nor does diffusion of innovation always lead to adoption. The reasons for resistance to change can be many such as economic unfeasibility, or incompatibility with the existing cultural system (Blaut 1977). The diffusion approach also assumes that the process of diffusion only affects the receiving societies, and hence embodies the concept of unilineal change rather than viewing the process as one of continuous though unequal interaction between the diffusing and the receiving societies.

Empirical invalidity of the diffusionist paradigm and the failure of diffusionist policies in development programmes have increasingly led geographers to express their dissatisfaction with this paradigm (Brookfield 1973, 1975; Porter and de Souza 1974), and to suggest alternative approaches such as the adoption of the dependency paradigm in the spatial analysis of development (Brookfield 1975; Ettema 1979).

Alternative Perspectives

Some of the alternative approaches suggested for the spatial analysis of development, such as the dependency paradigm, are holistic and take into account the interaction between the economic, social, and political systems of different societies from the international down to the local level of a city or a village (Brookfield 1975; Ettema 1979). There is also an increasing concern with questions such as quality of life, reduction of poverty, social
justice, the adaptive potential of existing technologies, and the
protection of the biosphere (Porter and de Souza 1974; Brookfield

Brookfield (1975) and Browett (1981) recommend a diffusionist
approach modified by micro-scale ecological perspective. Much of
the literature on development is concerned with the underdeveloped
world and with the process of development in countries and regions.
The "reformist" approach, however, is more concerned with the inves­
tigation of changes experienced by rural societies in the process of
development and seeks to link macro-level theorizing with micro-level
the "cultural ecology of economic development," but it can be ex­
tended to aspects of social and cultural development as well.

The increasing contacts and interaction between different
human populations lead to social, economic, and political intrusions
of the more highly organized systems on the less organized ones.
These intrusions, which may include forces such as colonial or
national policies, new forms of technology, commercialization of
property, monetization of economy, introduction of adult franchise,
education and health services, and introduction of a new religion,
result in significant changes in the established relationships
between the natural environment, the patterns of production, social
and political organization, and the cultural values especially of the
latter group, and lead to a restructuring of social and ecological
relationships within the group (Nietschmann 1973). The cultural-
ecological perspective of development is used to investigate the
changes experienced by societies in adapting to the new environments thus created. The focus in the study of development of rural societies, especially subsistence or near-subsistence groups, is thus on the process of cultural adaptation, which Denevan (1983:401) defined as "the process of change in response to a change in the physical environment or a change in internal stimuli, such as demography, economics, and organization."

Development, thus, is a tag used to conceptualize the process of change that is widespread in today's world. As a process, it is theoretically a progressive system of change, adaptation, more change and further adaptation. Development can occur in two ways: As a result of external pressures; or as a result of a society's internal mechanisms of adapting to change, externally imposed or internally generated. Friedmann (1972) treated development as occurring through the innovative forces constantly arising within or injected into an existing system. Schumpeter (1934:63), however, in his discussion on economic development stressed that development referred only to "such changes in economic life as are not forced from without but arise by its own initiative from within." This is a pertinent point because even when development occurs as a result of pressures from without, the internal regulatory mechanism of the society is activated to deal with the external pressures and in that sense development arises "from within." Development may also be forced upon a society by acts or policies of governments, planners, and extension agents. The building of schools and hospitals, and the injection of capital, for example, might change the "modernization" or "development" surface
but would not constitute qualitative development if the society does not perceive the need for these facilities and, thus, cannot use them effectively. A qualitative change, whether positive or negative or both, therefore, is an important concomitant factor of development.

DEVELOPMENT IN MANIPUR

Since the beginning of the present century, Manipur has been increasingly exposed to outside influences and its space and people have been gradually incorporated into an interdependent system of growing political and economic interaction. Activities occurring in one part of the system affect, in varying degrees, all other parts as well. The establishment of British administrative control, Christian missionary activity, invasion of the territory by Japanese forces during World War II, arrival of the mayang (people from "mainland" India) traders and contractors, large scale immigration by Nepalis, and the imposition of the administrative system and development policies of independent India, have all occurred in the past one hundred years. The increasing contacts and confrontations with missionaries, with armies and modern warfare, government officials and extension agents, indigenous ethnic groups and migrants, and exposure to modern education and political suffrage, have accelerated the process of change that is referred to as development. Initial differences in the levels of development in different parts of the state in conjunction with unequal diffusion of the forces of change and dissimilar adaptations to change, have resulted in differential
development. This study is concerned not just with the spatial patterns of development but also with understanding how such patterns developed.

Wilkinson (1973) and Brookfield (1975) argued that at the root of all development problems is the uneven distribution of scarce resources and that all technical progress which structures development arises from the need to overcome this scarcity. Many geographic studies of development, especially those conducted at the micro- and meso-scales, are concerned with production systems which create value from the resource base which is then allocated and redistributed through the system. Within the redistribution network, nodes of development emerge which are dependent upon the rest of the system but become powerful as a result of their ability to wield control over the allocation of the scarce resources. Adaptation to scarcity has thus resulted in the alleviation of scarcity for some at the cost of increasing its impact on others. The operation of development has thus been involved with forces seeking to gain an unequal share within this scarcity.

A significant decline in infant mortality and a greater control over common but often fatal diseases have occurred as a result of the spread of minimal medical facilities. In addition, large scale migration of Nepalis into Manipur during the last few decades has led to a rapid growth of population in the state. This pressure has heightened the perception of resource scarcity. Those groups or individuals who are able to appropriate or wield control over the allocation of scarce resources are becoming more powerful.
It is hypothesized that this conflict of interest between those who are in positions of control and those who are not, heightens the differences in the levels of development; and that poly-ethnic hostilities in Manipur are basically an expression of this conflict. The indigenous people of Manipur resent having to share their scarce resources with the mayang and the Nepalis who are seen as gaining and wielding an undesirable degree of control. The tribals view the Meitei as attempting to prevent the development of tribal areas while the Meitei resent the perferential policies of the government towards the tribals which put the latter in an advantageous position. Within the tribal groups, however, there have emerged elite groups that appropriate most of the benefits intended for the tribals at large and thus prevent a wider diffusion of development.

The present study seeks to understand, in addition to other processes, the emergence of the spatial patterns of development in relation to the distribution of the various ethnic groups and their relations with each other. In this attempt to relate development patterns with ethnicity, this study differs significantly from most other geographical studies of modernization and macro-level development.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based mainly on the Census of India data of Manipur for 1971, which is supplemented by information and data collected in the field. Because of the deteriorating law and order
situation accompanying the political unrest in the state (Kalbag 1982, 1983), field work after 1979 was not possible.

The 1981 Census data were not used because they have not yet been published. Although this study is about Manipur in transition and is concerned with processes of change over time, census data for previous decades were not used to make this a time series study because of the noncomparability of some of the categories as a result of redefinitions of variables used and changes in the classification procedures followed in the different censuses (Thorner and Thorner 1962; Schwartzberg 1969). Qualitative information about earlier conditions has, however, been used to give the study temporal depth and retain its comparative nature.

The Census provides information at the state, subdivision, and village levels. Although a lot more information is available for the state as a whole and for each of its administrative subdivisions, it is not possible to isolate spatially the different ethnic groups at those levels. It is, however, possible to identify the ethnicity of most villages. I, therefore, decided to use villages as the basic unit of study.

**Determination of Village Ethnicity**

Since a major concern of the present study is with comparative development of the different ethnic groups, the first step was to determine the ethnicity of each village. Published census data break down the social composition of villages into scheduled tribe
and scheduled caste categories. 

Whereas it is possible to arrive at population figures for the remaining element by subtracting the sum of these two categories from the total population of the village, elements of the social composition of the village such as the names and sizes of the tribal or the nontribal communities have to be learned at first hand (Sopher 1980c:28).

I followed Schwartzbeg's (1967b) recommendation of supplementing census-based reconnaissance with additional reading of pertinent literature (in this case, available ethnographies), and with field work to help refine, elaborate, or modify the outline or preliminary model. Since ethnic and caste affiliations play an important role in the political process in India, and ethnic loyalties are worked upon by politicians to secure votes, I decided to fill the gaps in my ethnicity identification by interviewing legislators from the different districts who were in Imphal, the state capital, to attend a session of the State Legislature. While some of the legislators were very helpful and knowledgeable, others were not.

I validated my information with spot checks during trips to different parts of the state. Ethnicity identification by different

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4 The scheduled castes are the ex-"untouchable" castes. The Indian Constitution has declared the practice of untouchability illegal, and provides special privileges to promote the welfare of these castes and to help them overcome centuries of oppression and exploitation. An official schedule of the castes is retained to indicate the castes still in need of the special program.
sources usually tallied, but the occasional contradictory identifications were checked out again by questioning people who belonged to that area. There were occasions when I got different answers from all my sources, and was therefore not able to determine the ethnicity of a village; on other occasions the informants were unaware of either the existence or the ethnicity of certain villages. This inability to identify usually pertained to the newer settlements that had been in existence for less than ten years. The older, more established, villages were more easily identified.

While my informants were generally in agreement over the ethnicity of the dominant group in a village (constituting more than 50 percent of the population), the ethnicity of the subsidiary groups was sometimes in dispute. The problem of identification arose much more frequently with regard to poly-ethnic rather than mono-ethnic villages, and with villages in poly-ethnic rather than mono-ethnic parts of the state.

Although I was able to identify Meitei, Nepali and tribal villages, and also the tribal identity of most tribal villages, it was not possible to isolate the mayang component. The mayang are largely an urban community and form only a small component of the total population of any settlement. While they are often concentrated in a particular neighborhood in a settlement, the mayang do not congregate to form a settlement of their own as do the Nepalis, particularly in the rural areas. The mayang are the most prosperous of the four groups, their prosperity being determined by their
previous exposure and greater access to processes of modernization and development. Their higher level of prosperity is also a result of the fact that they moved in to tap areas such as interstate trade and contracting road and building constructions, where initially there was no competition from the Meiteis or the tribals. The recent infiltration of Meitei entrepreneurs into this mayang preserve has resulted in friction between the two groups. Whereas the Nepalis, to begin with, came to Manipur mainly as graziers and dairymen, an occupation that did not interest the indigenous population, they soon acquired lands and settled down as cultivators and were then competing directly with the tribals and the Meiteis. The hostility of the people of Manipur against the Nepalis, thus, predates their hostility against the mayang.

Because it was not possible to identify the mayang component in space, this study is restricted to an analysis of the comparative levels of development of the other three groups: the Meitei, the Nepalis, and the tribals. There has been a tremendous increase in the Nepali population since the 1971 Census was conducted. I have used materials published since then to update information wherever possible and appropriate.

**Village Locations**

Manipur is located in what the Survey of India terms "Restricted Area," which means that because of its location along the international boundary of the country, large scale topographic maps of the state are considered classified material and are thus not
available for public use. Locating the villages on a topographic map, therefore, proved to be a problem. The maps of the area drawn by the Army Map Service of the United States at 1:250,000 scale are based on the Survey of India maps of 1923-42. Several of the villages shown on those maps do not exist any more at the locations marked because of the tendency of some of the tribes, especially the Kukis, to migrate every few years. Their migratory cycle of jhum, or shifting cultivation, was accompanied by a shift in the site of settlement as well as field. Although almost all villages have now been officially granted pattas or land titles by the government, there are still some groups which abandon their old village sites and establish new ones from time to time. Kotal Khunthak, for example, a village which was inhabited by 51 persons of the Lamgang tribe in 1961, was found deserted in 1971. These days there are official records of villages and when the population of that village migrates, that village site is considered to be a deserted village, and a new patta has to be obtained for the new village. In earlier times, the migrating groups generally retained their village names, so a village with a particular name would be found in different locations every few years.

In addition to the problem of migrations and deserted villages, new villages are created from time to time. When the population of a village becomes too large, a segment of the population breaks off and sets up a new hamlet or village. In Manipur there are several villages that have the same name as a neighboring village but with the suffix "Khunou," which means "the new village." The parent
village sometimes acquires the suffix "Khullen" or "the old settlement." In the Naga areas several new villages were created with the advent of Christianity. The friction between those who adopted the new religion and those who preferred to retain their own religion, frequently resulted in the entire Christian population moving out to establish a Christian colony (Horam 1977). Since Christianity was just beginning to spread in the hills of Manipur around the time for which topographic maps exist, these Christian settlements do not show up on them.

For the purpose of the present study, I thus used census maps of varying degrees of accuracy. The administrative subdivision maps in the District Census Handbooks (Census of India 1971, 1973a, b, c, d, and e) show the location of each village in that subdivision. The scale at which the maps of the different subdivisions are drawn is not consistent. To prepare a base map showing all the villages of the state, I first enlarged an outline map of Manipur with internal subdivisions shown. Next I enlarged the map of each of the subdivisions so that the subdivision boundaries fit in their appropriate place when overlaid on the state map, and marked the village locations on that map (Fig. 2.1).

Interestingly, none of the eight towns classified by the 1971 Census is a single settlement. Each one is really a collection of villages grouped together and classified as a town. Imphal, the state capital, is the only one that has a completely urban municipal area in addition to the villages that form a part of the town. None
Figure 2.1 Manipur: Administrative Subdivisions
of the towns, therefore, show up on the map of village locations but some of the villages comprising the towns do.

**Sampling Method**

There are 1,947 inhabited villages in Manipur, 1,383 in the hills, 102 in the Barak basin, a small basin along the western margin of the state, and 464 in the central valley (Census of India 1971, 1977a). The villages in the valleys (Barak and Central) and parts of the foothills are so closely clustered that it was very difficult to tell adjacent villages apart, especially when the map size was reduced. To preserve visual clarity in maps, and efficiency in processing data, I decided to select a sample of villages for my study.

The sampling method that I used is what Yates (1960:29) termed as "systematic samples from lists" and recommended as suitable for sampling Census data. This method involves the selection of every $q^{th}$ entry on the list, which in this case was every third entry from the list of villages in every subdivision of the six districts of Manipur. The first entry was made by selecting a number between 1 and 3 at random. The villages in each subdivision are numbered sequentially in space. By taking every third entry, a partial stratification was obtained, and the sample used is, therefore, more precise than a fully random sample would have been. This method ensured that the density of settlements in the sample would be representative of the density pattern of the population. All ethnic groups that occupy at least three adjacent villages, which even the
most dispersed groups in the state do, have an equal chance of being accurately represented. Since most ethnic groups tend to occupy distinct areas—the Thadou, a Kuki tribe, is a notable exception—a fairly accurate representation of the distribution of ethnicity was also ensured.

The sample used in this study contains 752 observations which, in addition to every third village, includes the subdivisional headquarters. I included these administrative centers even if they did not fall in the sample in order to determine whether they formed the nodes of development and centers of diffusion of the processes of development.

Organization of Village Data

The village-level data are published by the Census of India in the District Census Handbooks. These handbooks are divided into two parts: the town and village directory, and the primary census abstract. The village directory provides information on land use, such as area under forest, shifting cultivation or jhum, and permanent cultivation, and the length of the fallow period of the jhum cycle; and also information on educational, medical and postal facilities available in each village, its source of drinking water and status of electrification, distance of the village from the nearest town, the kind of road connecting the village, and whether the village is the site of a daily or periodic market. The primary
census abstract provides data on literacy and the different occupational categories, as well as the tribal and scheduled caste component of the village.

Based on the nature of the available data, I organized them into five categories: agricultural transformation, diversification of economy, accessibility, literacy status, and the availability of infrastructural amenities. The raw census data were used to compute a set of variables for each category on the basis of their ability to reflect either the continuance of the traditional forms of economy or the processes of transformation. A listing of these variables is provided in Table 5.1. The variables used have been described and the reasons for their selection have been discussed in the appropriate sections of Chapter 4. Several other indicators of the processes of development could have been used if data on aspects such as income levels, unemployment, size of land holdings, migration, religion, and voting patterns had been available. The selection of variables was, thus, governed and constrained by the nature of the census data available for individual villages. The indices used were selected on the basis of their ability to measure the relative levels of development and to explain the observed spatial variations in the conditions of development.

**Data Analysis**

The first part of the analysis (Chapter 4) examines the spatial patterns of development through simple descriptive-cartographic techniques. The raw data were converted into percentages and
location quotients. Whereas percentages reflect the proportion of a particular variable in a unit area, location quotient is a quantitative method used to express the proportion of a variable in a unit area in relation to the general distribution of that variable in the larger area of reference (Tidswell and Barker 1971; Mahmood 1977). This technique has generally been used in economic geography, but it is equally useful in analyzing the distribution of social phenomena. In her study of the tribal territories in India, Jain (1972) used location quotient as a measure of the concentration of tribal population in individual districts with respect to the concentration of tribal population in the country as a whole. In the present study, whereas percentages reflect the concentration of the variables for each village, location quotients represent the proportions of the variables for each village with reference to their proportion for the whole state taken as the norm. The conversion of the raw data into percentages and location quotients also eliminated the bias of scale.

The purpose of the first part of the analysis is to determine the existing patterns of spatial development in Manipur, and to

\[ LQ = \frac{p_{ij}}{P_i} \]

where, \( p_{ij} \) = the proportion of the \( i^{th} \) variable in the \( j^{th} \) village, and \( P_i \) = the proportion of the \( i^{th} \) variable in the state.

The critical value is, thus, always unity, which is obtained only when the degree of concentration or the proportion of a variable at the village level is the same as it is at the state level.
explain the evolution of the structure in terms of the operation of social, cultural, economic, demographic, political, and environmental factors. The attempt has been to understand the "inner workings" of the system as much as is possible at the meso-level. The constraints of data availability permitted the investigation of relationships between only certain aspects of the total system but, wherever possible, additional information is used to help clarify the picture.

In my investigation of agricultural transformation in the state, I have adopted the man-environment interaction approach, recommended by geographers such as Brookfield (1973, 1975) and Grossman (1977, 1981) for understanding the process and impress of development. I have sought to understand and explain the spatial differences in agricultural phenomena, activities, and techniques in terms of man-environment interaction through time and in space. Subsistence is basically a culturally expressed adaptive system of coping with changes in the environment--physical, biotic, and cultural. Any major ecological changes, changes in population size, or the diversion of resources to extraneous systems, would result in changes in the subsistence system to adjust the system, albeit imperfectly, to the new situation (Nietschmann 1973). My level of investigation, however, is not micro-geographic because the area I am dealing with is not comprised of a few families, a community, or a small group of villages, but rather a whole state which is diverse in its physiographic and ethnic composition.

Three of the five categories into which the data are here organized comprise the indicators of development commonly used in
macro-level studies of modernization. These include accessibility, infrastructural amenities, and the factors of economic diversification often used to indicate the process of urbanization. Subjecting the array of indicators to multivariate techniques, particularly the principal components analysis, geographers reduce the data into groups of principal factors responsible for the modernization process. The summary data thus obtained are then mapped to depict the "modernization" surface which is a composite map of areal variations in development at a given point in time. A comparison of "modernization surfaces" at different points on the temporal scale thus reflect the evolution of the structure and the emerging development cores and their peripheries (Soja 1968; Gould 1970; Riddell 1970; Leinbach 1972; Soja and Tobin 1975). Soja (1973:176), however, admitted that the "modernization surface" is a crude tool but stressed that its usefulness lies in its ability to provide "empirically verifiable insight into patterns of spatial change and a viable foundation for further analysis." The unavailability of comparable time series data at the village level for Manipur ruled out the option of attempting a similar exercise.

Although the simple descriptive-cartographic techniques used here are appropriate and adequate for understanding and explaining the spatial patterns of the individual indices of development and identifying areas of differential development, they can not be used to identify the exact nature of differences of development among the different ethnic groups. In order to test whether the different ethnic groups were significantly different from one another on the
basis of the variables selected, I performed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in Chapter 5. Although MANOVA is useful in determining whether all the group means are equal, or at least one pair of group means is unequal, it does not tell us which of the group means are unequal. To overcome this problem pairwise multiple comparisons of means were performed. This method takes the mean of one group and compares it to the mean of each of the other groups in all possible pairwise comparisons.

To determine whether the ethnic groups could be differentiated from one another on the basis of the selected variables, and which variables contributed most to that differentiation, I used discriminant analysis. This procedure is recommended as a follow-up to MANOVA and is useful not just for differentiating among various groups, but also for classifying subjects whose classification is unknown or uncertain (Hair et al. 1979; Harris 1975).

Using the methods described above I was able to statistically determine in Chapter 5 whether the three ethnic groups, the Meitei, Nepali, and tribal, were indeed different from each other in terms of the levels of development that they had attained. Based on the selected indicators of development, the discriminant analysis procedure classifies villages according to ethnic stereotypes that it creates (N. Allan 1978). I was, therefore, also able to identify the variables which contributed to the differences among the different ethnic groups.
CHAPTER 3

ETHNIC GROUPS AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

This study is concerned with the four major ethnic groups in Manipur: the Meitei, the tribals, the Mayang, and the Nepalis. In this chapter I clarify what I mean by the term ethnic group, describe the present pattern of distribution of the different ethnic groups in the state, reconstruct their probable sequence of settlement, and discuss the nature and the causes of the current hostilities among these groups.

In anthropological literature several criteria have been used to define the term "ethnic group." Some of the more important ones include language, political organization, territorial contiguity, ecological adjustment, trait distributions, local community structure, a common self-applied appellation, a sense of common identity, and a belief in common heritage (Narrol 1964; Bessac 1964). Barth (1969:10-11) summarized the characteristics generally attributed to the ideal "ethnic unit", in the following definition: a population which is largely biologically self-perpetuating; shares fundamental cultural values; makes up a field of communication and interaction; and has members who identify themselves and are identified by others as constituting a category distinct from other categories of the same order.

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The four groups that I have termed as ethnic groups do not fit this definition. Instead of being homogeneous culture bearing units, each of the four groups is composed of several heterogeneous subunits (Fig. 3.1). In fact, these subunits approximate the definition more closely. The tribal category, for example, is made up of several different tribes who consider themselves as distinct cultural entities, speak different languages or dialects, often mutually unintelligible, and are largely endogamous. The dominant constituents of the mayang category are the Bengalis, the Marwaris, the Sikhs, and the Tamils who come from different parts of India, speak different languages, follow different religions (the Marwaris are mainly Jains and the Bengalis and Tamils predominately Hindus), and they do not intermarry. The Nepalis, too, are made up of several different groups such as the Gurung, Newar, Magar, and Limbu, who originally came from different parts of Nepal, speak different dialects, and can be either Buddhists or Hindus or even Christians. Subsumed under the appellation Meitei, relatively the most homogeneous of the four categories, are several different groups such as the Manipuri Muslims or the Meitei Pangal, who are the descendants of Bengali emigrants from the neighboring districts of Sylhet and Cachar who settled in Manipur nearly two centuries ago; the low caste Lois who are believed by some to be descendants of the once powerful Moirang tribe which was later subdued by the Meiteis, and by others to be descendants of exiled Meitei criminals (Brown 1874; Roy Burman 1970); the Bishnupurias who speak a Sanskritic language; and the Meitei "proper."
*The term Manipuri is used here to differentiate the indigenous people of the state from outsiders. According to local usage the term is used synonymously with Meitei but is never applied to the tribal category.
In recent years there has been a shift in the approach to studying ethnic groups. Cultural unity, which was earlier given primary importance as a definitional characteristic of ethnicity, is now considered an important result of ethnic group organization. Ethnic groups are now viewed as ascriptive groups, occurring as a result of the existence and maintenance of social boundaries, which may sometimes also coincide with territorial boundaries (Barth 1969). Essential for the maintenance of ethnic boundaries is interaction between different groups because only then is the feeling of being different from the other group reinforced and overt cultural expressions marking the differences strengthened. Ethnic groups, thus, persist as identifiable entities. Lehman (1967) suggested that when people identify themselves as members of some ethnic category, they are taking positions in culturally defined systems of intergroup relations. He claimed that ethnic categories are formally like roles, the role being defined not in absolute terms, but relative to a whole system of other roles.

"Meitei," "Tribal," "Mayang," and "Nepali" are all ascriptive categories. Some of these appellations are self-applied, others such as mayang and tribal have generally been applied by others but have now also been accepted by the members of the categories themselves. The mayang, for example, despite their great ethnic and cultural diversity, are perceived by the inhabitants of Manipur as a category of non-Mongoloid exploitative people from mainland India. What the mayang have in common is mainly their economic activity--most of them are traders, businessmen, and contractors. As a group, they consider
themselves to be smarter, more sophisticated, and more astute than the local people, both tribal and non-tribal. Whatever differences and prejudices might exist among the different component units of the mayang category, the recent expressions of hostility against people perceived as belonging to this category have strengthened the mayang identity. Although they continue to retain their individual cultural identities, the mayang have united to ensure their economic well being. The Mayang Traders' Association in Imphal, besides dealing in matters such as tariffs and taxes, also decides which political candidates the mayang community should support in local elections.

The Nepalis too, like the mayang, while retaining their cultural identity as Gurungs, Newars, etc. in their social interaction among themselves, present a unified front at the state level to ensure and further their economic and political interests. All persons in Manipur who are either themselves Nepali immigrants or whose ancestors migrated to India a few generations ago, are considered as Nepalis even though many of them were born in India and are, thus, legally Indian citizens. In fact, according to the 1971 Census, only 6,940 of the 26,495 Nepalis living in Manipur were born in Nepal (Census of India 1971, 1977b:5).

The name Meitei has been given to the Hinduized valley dwellers of Manipur by themselves, and has been extended to cover the Brahmins, Muslims, Lois, Bishnupurias, and Yaithibi as well. The category is, thus, not only vertically stratified into various
castes, but is also horizontally diverse. Whereas these differences are maintained and perpetuated at the level of social interaction, they pale into insignificance when the interaction is of a different order and involves insiders versus outsiders, or the exploited versus the exploiters, the economically threatened versus those who threaten. All the different groups are then perceived as members of the Meitei ingroup. The term "Manipuri" is synonymous with Meitei and includes all the other indigenous inhabitants of the valley, but locally is not applied to the tribal population of Manipur.

In Manipur, the term "tribal" has been applied to the people inhabiting the hills surrounding the central valley. Most of these people are shifting cultivators, and were animists until the early part of the present century when missionaries arrived and converted many of them to Christianity. The term "tribal" was applied to them by the British government officials and was retained by the new government of independent India as a convenient category towards which to direct some of its development policies.

Schermerhorn (1978:11-12) furthered the view that ethnic groups become differentiated as a result of recurrent historical patterns, or "intergroup sequences," that link them with the larger society. He mentioned six such sequences, the one applicable to tribal groups being "the emergence of indigenous isolates." According to this view, increasing contact with outsiders shatters the comparative isolation of the tribal groups. The impact of the
economic and political institutions of the outsiders, which results in the breakdown of the insularity of the "indigenous isolates," also fosters their participation in the wider society.

The hill dwellers of Manipur are not a homogeneous group. On the basis of linguistic affinities the British divided them into two broad groups: the Naga and the Kuki. The Kukis were further divided into the "Old" and the "New" Kukis depending upon their relative time of arrival in Manipur. Each of these categories is composed of tribal groups who knew themselves only by their own names and were unaware of the affinities the academic classification ascribed to them. The official schedule of tribes recognizes twenty seven tribal groups in Manipur. Table 1 summarizes the Naga/Kuki classification of these groups by different authors. Despite their rugged habitat, the different groups of people were never completely isolated, but in recent years the degree of interaction between the different groups living in the hills and their contact with outsiders--the mayang, the Meitei, and the Nepalis--has increased. The political environment of suspicion and hostility against the other ethnic groups has nurtured a feeling of tribal solidarity among the otherwise diverse groups—a feeling which was earlier nonexistent. In fact, the various Naga tribes who knew themselves only by their own tribal names such as Ao, Tangkhul, or Rengma, while recognizing their common names and claiming common descent, were not organized as a unit beyond the individual village, and sometimes not even beyond a khel or a clan ward into which most Naga villages were divided. Davis (1891:237) noted that the unit of Naga society is not the village but the khel
Table 3.1

Naga/Kuki Classifications of the Scheduled Tribes of Manipur

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and that he knew of "no Angami village of any size which is not divided against itself by bitter feuds which exist between its component parts." Several of the Naga tribes were head hunters and thought nothing of slaying men, women and children of another village of their own tribe or of a rival clan of their own village (Davis 1891:237). This practice was common till as late as the end of the nineteenth century when the British, who had by then extended their control over the hill areas of northeast India, put an end to it by severely punishing the people by sometimes burning whole villages that had indulged in a headhunting spree (Mackenzie 1884).¹ The

¹It is popularly believed that headhunting was practised to settle scores, take revenge, and to prove one's manhood. Hutton (1928a:401), however, believed that headhunting was mainly a result of the belief that the head was the receptacle of the soul and the soul was fertilizing matter, and heads were thus taken to ensure crop fertility. He gave the example of the Wa of Burma among whom headhunting was a seasonal activity associated directly with the "springing of the crop ... the opening and closing dates for this sport being fixed and known to everybody" (Hutton 1928a:403). He was also of the opinion that the value of female heads was higher than that of male heads on account of a higher fertility rating (Hutton 1928b:79). Hutton stressed the distinction between the genuine, original headhunters--the Naga tribes, and the Kukis who also took heads but were really slave hunters. He believed that the Kukis acquired the practice by contact with the genuine headhunters, "and having fused it with his slave-hunting propensities and beliefs, so that he now takes heads in order that the soul, conceived of as a person and quite different from the true headhunter's conception of it as a sort of life essence, may serve his dead in Mithiko [the after world]" (Hutton 1928b:78). The location of most Naga villages on tops of hills, commanding a clear view of the surrounding area, and the heavy stockades and lookout posts around the villages noted by most of the earlier British writers (Elwin 1969) ensured protection of the villages from surprise raids by headhunting neighbors. The internecine clan feuds also led to the building of stockades between the different khels or clan wards of a single village. With the establishment of peace and order in these hill villages, the stockades slowly disappeared.
punitive expeditions resulted in the khels of a village uniting against the common enemy—the British.

After the British left India, there was a surge of Naga tribalism. All the hitherto autonomous village units started asserting their unity not only with other village units of the same tribe, but they also adopted the alien ascriptive term "Naga" to assert unity at a much higher level. The emergence of this new phenomenon was basically a reaction to the new political situation. The hill areas of northeast India had never been an integral part of India until the British established limited jurisdiction when the Burmese threatened them with their intention of annexing most of this frontier region (Mackenzie 1884:101-143; Roy 1958). Even then the British followed a policy of limited interference and administration mainly due to the fierce resistance the Nagas had put up against every British attempt to subdue them. The hill areas of northeast India were designated as "Excluded Areas," protected from encroachments by outsiders (mainly the plainsmen), and only lightly imposed by British authority. When India achieved independence, the newly installed government decided to extend its effective control over even the most far flung corners of the country. Most Naga tribes, or at least segments of the Nagas, reacted violently to this establishment of alien control, and their rejection of "alien overlordship"
marked the beginnings of the growth of Naga tribalism and also the Naga secessionist movement.²

The process of realignment and strengthening of tribal identities shows up clearly in Table 1, which summarizes the classification of each of the presently recognized tribal groups as Nagas or Kukis by different authors during the past one hundred years. The bottom row of the table, based on Roy Burman's (1970:101) social identification schedule canvassed to a sample of fifty-five members of each community, shows how the groups identify themselves in terms of the Naga-Kuki dichotomy. The Anal, Chothe, Kom, and Lamgang, who had generally been classified as Kukis now identify themselves as Nagas. The Aimol, Chiru, Koireng, and Monsang who had been classified as Kukis by some and as Nagas by others, prefer to apply the latter classification to themselves. This preference for the Naga identity appears to be a result of the advantages people perceive in being aligned with the politically more powerful groups.

Recently, there has been a similar move toward tribal solidarity among the groups identified by the British as Kuki and

²In addition to the change of rule, Schermerhorn (1978:86) attributed the precipitation of Naga rebellion to the following factors: "the exposure of Nagas to modern warfare as employed in guerilla forays against the Japanese during World War II ... the arousal of nationalistic expectations when the British encouraged the formation of the Naga National Council [NNC] after the war;" signing of an agreement between the NNC and the Indian government, which was interpreted by the Council as a promise to grant the Nagas independence after ten years; and, the charismatic leadership of Phizo who commanded the Naga underground warfare for several years.
Lushei. They have adopted the name "Mizo," or hillmen, for themselves and their demands for greater autonomy led to the creation of Mizoram in 1972 from the erstwhile Lushai Hills district of Assam. In the past few years, some of the Kuki groups of Manipur, such as the Hmar, have started asserting their Mizo identity, and there has even been a demand for a "Greater Mizoram" which would incorporate the southern part of the Manipur hills and the neighboring districts of Assam where there is a significant concentration of Mizo population.

This process of strengthening of ethnic identity is occurring not only among the various tribal groups, but among each of the ethnic groups discussed thus far. An understanding of the emergence of "ethnicism" requires an insight into the sequence of arrival of the different groups in the state, their interaction with each other, their present distribution; and a knowledge of the physical setting of the space which they inhabit.

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The 22,356 square kilometer area that makes up Manipur lies in the northeastern corner of India, and shares its eastern and southern boundaries with Burma. The north-south running Assam-Burma ranges, of which Manipur is a part, are an offshoot of the Himalayas and extend from the eastern extremity of the Great Himalayan range in Arunachal Pradesh, India to Cape Negrais in southwest Burma. Stamp (1960) referred to this entire expanse as the Eastern Hills Region, Spate (1957) called it the Indo-Burmese Mountain System, and Singh (1971) named the Indian portion of the region "Purvanchal". This
region is believed to have been a part of the Tethys Sea in the Archaean period which was raised to its present status as a result of successive periods of orogenic activity that lasted till early Pleistocene. The region is still very unstable and forms an important seismic zone of the earth.\(^3\)

The mountain ranges in the Purvanchal run east-west as far as Lohit in Arunachal Pradesh, where they turn sharply to the south (Fig. 3.2). This southerly arm is composed of closely packed north-south aligned ranges separated by narrow valleys. Different parts of this mountainous belt are known by different names. The narrow belt in the north, known as the Patkai Hills, widens out to form the Naga Hills from where a limb branches off to the west and is known as the Barail range. The Naga Hills bifurcate further south and wrap around the Manipur Valley, and are known as the Manipur Hills. The two branches coalesce and continue as the Mizo Hills in India, the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh, and the Chin Hills in Burma. Still further south, the hill belt gradually narrows to form the Arakan Yomas. The elevation of the ranges in the entire region is between nine hundred and 2100 meters, yet they are referred to as "hills" because of their relative lowness compared with the lofty Himalayas of which they are an offshoot.

\(^3\)The most vividly remembered earthquake in the Manipur valley occurred on January 10, 1869. It caused the King's palace, the British residency, and the state treasury building to collapse, and mud and sand to spew forth from cracks that appeared in the earth (Brown 1874:95).
Figure 3.2 Northeast India: Physiography
The most striking feature of the physiography of Manipur, which lies roughly in the middle section of this hill region, is the arrangement of the hills around the central valley. The oblong valley comprises only 8 percent of the area of the state but supports nearly 67 percent of its total population. A majority of these people are Meitei peasants whose wet paddy fields give the valley its lush green appearance. Imphal, the state capital, is located in the valley. Of the remaining area of the state, 91 percent is occupied by the hills, which are the home of the tribal people who are predominantly shifting cultivators. West of the hills lies another valley covering only 1 percent of the state's total area. This small valley is drained by the Barak river and its tributary Jiri, and is inhabited by a much more heterogeneous mix of people: some Meitei, some Manipuri Muslims, some tribals from the neighboring hill areas of Manipur, Mizoram and Cachar, and some immigrants and refugees from Assam, West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Physiographically, thus, Manipur can be divided into two major and one minor regions: the Manipur hills, the Manipur valley, and the Barak basin (Fig. 3.3).

The Manipur Hills

The arcuate Indo-Burmese mountain system is narrow at its two extremities, but widens out in the middle into several parallel ranges of hills separated by narrow valleys and connected by transverse spurs and ridges. The Manipur Hills, which occupy part of the central bulge in this mountain system, are the southward continuation
Figure 3.3 Physiography of Manipur: A Cross Section

Transverse located on physiographic overlay of Manipur
of the Naga Hills which diverge as two branches, the Manipur eastern and western hills, to enclose the central valley, and converge again to continue southward as the Mizo (earlier known as the Lushai) hills and the Chin hills.

The Manipur Eastern Hills consist of a series of parallel ranges which run along the eastern frontier between Manipur and Burma. This chain of hills is nearly two hundred kilometers long and about fifty kilometers wide in the north, tapering off to thirty kilometers in the south. The eastern slopes overlooking the Kabaw Valley in Burma are quite steep, but the western slopes are gentler and become lower as they approach the Manipur valley. The topography, however, is rugged. The hills are higher in the north than in the south. The average elevation of this chain of hills is about eighteen hundred meters but rises as high as 2,833 meters as the Khayangbung, the highest peak in this section, and to 2,568 meters as the Sirhoi peak, famous for the rare Sirhoi lily (Kingdon-Ward 1952).

The Manipur Western Hills are 180 kilometers long and almost as wide as the eastern hills in the north but they widen out southwards to nearly seventy kilometers. These hills, too, are much higher in the north where most of the important peaks are located: Tempu (2,944 meters), Leikot (2,831 meters), and the famous Koubru peak (2,652) believed to be the home of the Koubru deity of the Meiteis. Unlike the eastern hills, the western hills slope steeply down to the Manipur valley.
The Manipur Valley

The Manipur valley is a unique physiographic feature because it is a fairly extensive tract of plain land lying in an otherwise hilly region. The other valleys lying within this rugged region are much smaller in extent. The oblong Manipur valley extends fifty eight kilometers from north to south, thirty two kilometers from east to west, and covers an area of approximately eighteen hundred square kilometers.

This intermontane valley is believed to be of lacustrine origin (Spate 1957; Ansari 1976a). Because of its average elevation of about eight hundred meters above mean sea level, the valley is also referred to as the Manipur Plateau (Stamp 1960). It slopes gently from north to south. The lowest portion in the southwestern corner is occupied by the Loktak Lake, which is perhaps a remnant of the original lake. The Loktak is about twelve kilometers long and eight kilometers wide, and during the rainy season the volume of water increases and spills over to cover almost double the area that it covers during the dry season. The edges of the lake are, therefore, marshy. An important element of the landscape in the Manipur valley are the numerous ponds and marshes, locally known as

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4The theory of the valley's lacustrine origin was contested by Oldham (1883:21) who claimed that there should have been remains of terraces formed by cutting down of the outlet. Ansari (1976a:17), however, pointed out the occurrence of a few patches of high level gravel deposits above the general level of the plain, and claimed that their existence is closely connected with the formation of the central valley.
pat, that are scattered all over the valley floor. Many of them fill up only during the rainy season, but are almost dry the rest of the year. These pat and lakes are rich in fish, an important element of Meitei diet. Fishing is the major activity of some of the Loi communities living around the Loktak.

The flat valley floor is dotted with a few hills rising from it, such as the Longol hill and the Chingjao hill lying to the north and east of Imphal respectively. A few hills also project above the waters of the Loktak lake, the prominent ones being Karong, Thanga, Ithing, and Sendra. Ansari (1976b) suggested that these hills are the peaks of a hill range, the lower portion of which is buried under the alluvium of the valley floor. Since these outcrops line up and are parallel to the bordering ranges, it seems reasonable to assume that the formation of the Manipur valley was originally similar to that of the surrounding hills and valleys.

The Manipur valley is drained by the Manipur river and its tributaries—Imphal, Iril, Thoubal, Nambul, Nambol, Chakpi and Khuga. Most of these rivers are prone to annual flooding. The receding flood waters deposit fresh alluvium on the inundated areas each year. Because of its flat terrain, rich alluvial soil, adequate water supply and a favorable climate with a long, hot summer with average temperatures in the low 30's (°C), a short mild winter with an average temperature of about 20°C, and about 1500 mm of rainfall

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5 Thanga, the largest of the steep islands in the Loktak, was once the place to which Manipuri kings deported criminals (Allen 1905).
concentrated in the summer months, the valley is ideally suited to the cultivation of rice. In addition to being intensively cultivated, the valley is also the administrative capital and the center of most of the secondary and tertiary sector activities in the state. It is, thus, able to support 67 percent of the total population of the state, even though it accounts for only 8 percent of the total area.

The Barak Plain

In addition to the two major regions: the Manipur hills and the Manipur valley, another distinct, though small, region which forms a part of Manipur is the Barak plain. It lies beyond the western hills along the western border of the state. The Barak plain which is, in fact, an extension of the Surma valley of Assam, covers an area of only 250 square kilometers. This plain was formed by the headward erosion of, and subsequent deposition by, the Barak river and its tributary--the Jiri.

DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

The Barak plain, being the most accessible part of the state from the west, is inhabited by immigrants and refugees from Assam, West Bengal and Bangladesh, tribals from the western hills of Manipur and from neighboring Mizoram and the hill district of Cachar in Assam, some Nepalis, some Meiteis, and some Manipuri Muslims. The Muslim population in Manipur is believed to be descended from Bengali and Assamese Muslims who migrated from the neighboring districts of
Sylhet and Cachar two to four hundred years ago, and married local Meitei women (Brown 1874).

The Meiteis in the Barak basin are believed to be descendants of those who migrated to this outlying part of the state and to parts of Assam and Tripura in the nineteenth century to escape the ravages of repeated Burmese invasions. The major concentration of the Meiteis, however, is in the central valley of Manipur.

The mayang form a very small proportion of the population and are confined mainly to the urban areas in the central valley. Some of the settlements along the Burma border, such as Moreh, have a sizable mayang component, some of whom are traders, but a majority of them are soldiers of the Indian Border Security Force and their families. Events since the time I collected the information on ethnicity have changed the distribution pattern to some extent. Since the intensification of terrorist activity five years ago, there has been an exodus of the mayang, especially of women and children, while the men stayed back to protect and salvage what they could of their properties and businesses. The distribution of the mayang, however, does not show up on the map (Fig. 3.4) because they do not form the dominant majority in any settlement in Manipur.

The Nepalis are concentrated in the foothills just north of the valley. The huge influx of Nepalis in the past decade has resulted in the establishment of new villages in the southeastern part of the valley, and they have also penetrated the Khuga valley in the hills just southwest of the central valley. Some of these
DOMINANT NO OF ETHNIC GROUP VILLS

T TRIBAL 559
M MEITEI 177
N NEPALI 16

Figure 3.4
changes are too recent to show up on the map which was constructed on the basis of the information obtained in the field.

Distribution of Tribal Groups

There are several tribal groups in Manipur ranging in size from three (Sahte) to 59,955 persons (Thadous) who claim to be distinct tribal entities. The Census of India, which follows the official Schedule of Castes and Tribes, recognizes only twenty seven such groups. These are the Aimol, Anal, Angami, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Hmar, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Koireng, Koirao, Kom, Lamgang, Any Mizo (Lushai), Mao, Maram, Maring, Moyon, Paite, Ralte, Sema, Simte, Sahte, Tangkhul, Thadou, Vaiphei and Zou. The Schedule, however, is considered unrealistic and unscientific because it leaves out many tribes which consider themselves as distinct from those scheduled, for example the Tarao and the Baite. The Tarao population appears to be recorded as Maring who are their immediate neighbors (Kabui 1976), and the Baite are considered a subtribe of the Thadou (Baite 1976). The Zemis, Liangmeis and Rongmeis (or Kabuis) consider themselves as separate groups and have combined to form the confederacy of the Zeliangrong (Kabui 1982), which has not been recognized in the Schedule, but the Zemis and the Liangmeis are clubbed under the general term Kacha Naga.

Looking at the distribution of the individual tribal groups, although it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty what were the routes and sequence of immigration and settlement, it seems reasonable to assume that when a group occupied a particular territory they must have guarded it jealously against intrusions or
encroachments by other groups.⁶ Rivers and crests of hills could have formed natural boundaries between the different groups. Initially, movements inside the State must have been mainly a result of intertribal warfare and a search for suitable land by the ousted community. Later, increased contacts, the evolution of a limited form of market economy among some groups, some improvements in technology, improved accessibility resulting from the building of metalled and unmetalled roads in the hills, and the pressure of a rapidly growing population have led to further migrations and redistribution of population within the state. Despite these movements, it should be possible to identify the territory of each group.

The map of the distribution of the tribal populations in the hills (Fig. 3.5) reveals that there is only one distinctly mono-tribal region in Manipur: the homeland of the Mao. The Thadou are found all over the state except in the extreme north, the south, and south western parts of the state. The widespread distribution of the Thadou is largely a result of their settlement by the rulers of the valley, and by the British, among other tribes to act as buffers or sentries (Johnstone 1896; Shakespear 1912). Their presence in the territory of another tribe, therefore, should not disqualify that territory from being considered the homeland of that

⁶ According to Spencer (1966:75-76) literature on the subject suggests that most groups had clear concepts of land that belonged to them. "In the frame of reference of their own culture, the group 'owned' such areas without question ... Group reaction to invasion, infringement, territorial conquest, or other form of transgression upon the 'owned' area was as clear as is the contemporary reaction to transgression across boundaries by modern political states."
Figure 3.5
tribe. In that case, the Tangkhul territory emerges very clearly in the Manipur East district, where we find Tangkhul villages interspersed with Thadou villages. Thadou villages are much less in number in the northern part of the district, their concentration increasing southwards and southwestwards towards the valley.

The Kabuis, or Rongmei, and the Kacha Nagas, or the Zemis and the Liangmeis, occupy fairly distinct territories as well. The Kabuis are concentrated mainly in the Tamenglong and Nungba subdivisions of the West district, whereas the Kacha Nagas have their major concentration in Tamenglong North and Tamenglong West, and in the western part of the Mao West. Viewed as the confederacy of the Zeliangruong, they cover the entire West district. There are some Thadou villages in the Maram area in the North district, as well as in the Koirao territory lying just south of them. The Thadou are also interspersed with the Maring over a large part of the Tengnoupal subdivision, immediately south of the Tangkhul territory.

There are some tribes who are exclusive occupants of fairly distinct areas, but are also found distributed outside these areas of mono-tribal concentration. An example of such groups are the Paite. In the Tengnoupal district certain tribes live in well defined pockets. The Chothe villages lie along the Maha Turel river just south of Palel in the Chandel subdivision; the Aimol are located in the southeastern part of the Tengnoupal subdivision; the Anal villages lie on either side of the Chakpi river between the townships of Chandel and Chakpikarong; and the Lamgang occupy the area south of
the Chothe and north of the Anal in Chandel. The Moyon lie exclusively in the Chandel subdivision and their villages are sandwiched between those of the Chothe, Aimol, Monsang, Lamgang and Maring. The Monsang villages are adjacent to the Lamgang. Since this distribution is plotted on the basis of a sample, the boundaries between tribes are, in fact, not as clear-cut as they appear to be. Although most villages belonging to a single tribe tend to be adjacent to each other, the boundaries are quite fluid and often intersect each other.

The remaining tribes do not inhabit exclusive territories but live in multi-tribal areas. These include the Vaiphei, Kom, Chiru, Gangte, Koireng, Simte, and Mizo. The distribution of the Sema, Sahte, Ralte and Angami, who have negligible populations, is not known.

The margins of the valley show a high degree of intermingling of tribal populations especially in parts of Churachandpur, Chandel and Sadar Hills subdivisions that border the valley. As these areas are comprised of low foothills separated by small valleys, they are easily accessible, more fertile and able to support larger populations. Since natural barriers, especially in Churachandpur and the Sadar Hills, are few there is a lot of intermingling of populations and hence a lack of clearcut tribal territories. Given such a terrain it must have been difficult to ward off intruders who were technologically at par with the earlier settlers. It is quite likely that the areas ringing the valley received peoples who had tried to move out of the hills but were pushed back again towards the hills from the valley.
Based on the above discussion on the pattern of their distribution, the various tribal groups can be divided into the following categories:

1. Tribes inhabiting clearly defined mono-tribal territories. The Mao belong to this category.

2. Tribes inhabiting clearly defined territories, interspersed with Thadou settlements. The tribes in this category are the Tangkhul, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Maram, Koirao, and Maring.

3. Tribes with distinct and sizeable areas of concentration, but with a considerable proportion of their population spread outside their exclusive habitat. To this group belong the Zou, Paite, Hmar, Gangte, and Thadou.

4. Tribes occupying well-defined pockets, with very few outliers. Included in this category are the Chothe, Aimol, Anal, Lamgang, Moyon, and Monsang.

5. Tribes with a wide distribution, but concentrated in areas of multi-tribal habitation. The Vaiphei, Kom, and Chiru fall under this category.

6. Tribes with no distinct area of concentration, but found interspersed with other tribes. This category includes all the remaining tribes, namely the Koireng, Simte, Mizo, Angami, Ralte, Sema, and Sahte.
Ethnic Territories

Looking at the distribution of ethnic groups in a broader perspective, the entire northeastern region of India can be divided into sectors or territories inhabited by people belonging to different ethnic categories. We would thus find a Naga territory, a Khasi territory, a Kuki territory, a Mizo territory, to mention only a few. These sectors or territories do not always conform with political or administrative boundaries, but often extend beyond them. Conversely, while carving out political or administrative units, ethnic considerations are often ignored. Even when the purpose involved is to grant statehood or nationhood to a particular ethnic group, only the core area, and not the entire territory, is included in the creation of the new unit. The Naga territory, thus, extends beyond the limits of the state of Nagaland, and the Mizo territory beyond the limits of Mizoram. The small groups, each having its own distinct identity, lying within a particular sector and claiming affinity with the larger group, are subsets of this larger group. The Tangkhuls of Manipur and the Aos of Nagaland both are, thus, subsets of the larger Naga group or the Naga sector.

Manipur is an area of convergence of three such sectors: the Meitei, the Naga, and the Kuki or the Mizo, both terms being used synonymously. The Meitei sector is confined to the central valley

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7 In recent years, most tribes designated by British sources as "Old Kukis" prefer to identify themselves as Mizos. The Thadous, one of the "New Kukis," are one of the few groups who identify themselves as "Kukis."
of Manipur, but is overlapped around the edges by the Naga sector which lies to the north, east and west of the Manipur Valley, and the Kuki sector which covers the areas in the south, south-west and south-east of the state (Fig. 3.6). Both the Naga and the Kuki/Mizo territories extend beyond the state and international boundaries of Manipur. The distribution of ethnic groups in Manipur should thus be viewed as an intersectoral subset problem.

Whereas the Naga tribes tend to be concentrated in specific areas of the State, the Kuki tribes, especially the Thadous, are found almost all over the State. This peculiarity can be explained by the migratory nature of the Kukis, particularly the later immigrants or the New Kukis of whom the Thadous are the major constituent. Since they were the last sizeable group to have been driven out of the Lushai Hills, by the time they entered Manipur, the state was almost fully populated. As a result there was not enough land for them to settle down and hence they constantly moved from one patch of available land to another. In recent years, the Kukis have acquired pattas or legal rights to the land they cultivate, and have thus become more sedentary. However, several Kuki villages surveyed during the previous census were found abandoned during the 1971 census enumeration, while new villages had sprung up where earlier none had existed.

8 In his "Introduction" to Shaw's Notes on Thadou Kukis Hutton (1928b:5) wrote, "They are by no means nomads but they lack the restraint of proprietorship. Where they have succeeded in acquiring land of their own they seem ready and content to settle down permanently."
Figure 3.6
Another reason for the widespread distribution of the Kuki tribes, especially the Thadous, is that because of their truculence, the rulers of the Manipur valley settled them all over the foothills and in the Naga areas to act as a buffer between the Meiteis and the raiding tribes from the hills (Johnstone 1896:62-63; Shakespear 1912:192). They were also settled along the eastern boundary of the state and used as a barrier against the marauding Burmese (Shaw 1928:46).

In many cases the members of the different tribal communities are not aware of the academic classifications applied to them, and identify themselves only by the name of their own community. Identity crises occur in the case of groups inhabiting the marginal or transitional areas of two sectors, or in the areas of inter-sectoral overlap. In such cases it might become difficult to decide which category the group belongs to. Because of the growing political awareness in tribal areas, unless there are strong historical ties with a particular category the group in question tends to identify itself with the larger group to which it feels it would be more advantageous to attach itself. For example, the Anal, Aimol, Moyon, and Monsang of Manipur, who had hitherto been identified as Kukis, have now started claiming to be Nagas because of a polarization of a Naga identity and the Naga secessionist movement.

How the present distribution of the different ethnic groups in Manipur came about needs to be looked at in terms of the sequent occupation of the state.
SEQUENT OCCUPATION OF MANIPUR

The physiography of Manipur governed the movement and direction of the migrant streams which entered the state. Since the valley of Manipur is completely surrounded by hills, all immigrants must have entered through the hills. In that case, are the inhabitants of the valley those who reached the valley first and then warded off successive waves of invaders who then kept to the hills, or were the successive streams of immigrants able to push the earlier settlers into the hills and establish themselves in the valley? What was the sequence of these migratory movements? Where were the original homelands of the migrants? From which direction did they come and which route did they follow? Were the settlers of the valley able to establish themselves there because they possessed superior technological skills, or did they achieve a higher level of agricultural development compared with the settlers in the hills because of a more favorable habitat? These are some of the questions that arise at this stage. Unfortunately, they cannot be answered satisfactorily because of a lack of adequate historical and documentary evidence.

That Manipur was located on an important route of migration for peoples leading both from and to Burma, has been established by Phayre (1883) and Choudhury (1966). Phayre noted the presence of Kshatriya settlers in Burma who migrated from India through
Manipur. In his discussion on Assam being the node of migration routes leading to and from India on the one hand and south east Asia on the other, Choudhury (1966:75) mentioned Manipur as being one of the two Assam-Burma routes, the other being across the Patkai passes in the northeast, leading from Lidu-Margharita road to China through the Hukawng Valley in Burma.10

At some undetermined point in time, various branches of the Indo-Chinese sub-group of the Mongloid race started to move into Manipur (Phayre 1883:6; Choudhury 1966:55). Exactly when and how these migrations and settlements took place is uncertain. Mainly on the basis of linguistic affinities, the British had divided the population of Manipur into three broad groups: the Meitei, the Naga, and the Kuki (Grierson 1927). The Meiteis are believed to have been living in the valley for over two thousand years. Cheitharol Kumbaba, the Meitei royal chronicle, starts with events occurring during the reign of Pakhangba, the first historical king of the Meiteis, who ruled sometime between A.D. 33 and 156. The Kangbalon,  

9"The route by which the Kshatriya princes arrived is indicated as being through Manipur, which lies within the basin of the Irrawadi. The northern part of the Kubo Valley, which is the direct route from Manipur towards Burma, is still called Mauriya or Maurira, said to be the name of the tribe to which King Asoka belonged" (Phayre 1883:4).  

10In addition to the Assam-Burma routes, Choudhury (1966:75) mentioned three others: one in the north through the mountain passes of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan; another from the west through the valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra; and a third, by sea across the Bay of Bengal passing through Bengal or Burma.
relates accounts of legendary kings of Manipur, dating from circa 500 B.C.

While there are traditions extant which claim that the Meitei are the indigenous people of the valley (Roy 1958), the more popular legend claims that the valley was originally occupied by several tribes, all of whom came from different directions. The four most important tribes were the Koomul, Looang, Moirang, and Meitei (McCulloch 1859; Hodson 1908). Different tribes were more powerful at different times, but finally the Meitei subdued all others and their name became applicable to all. Pemberton's (1835) claim that the Meiteis were descended from a Tatar colony in China, was rejected by both Brown (1874) and Hodson (1908), who were strongly of the opinion that the Meiteis are really descendants of the neighboring hill tribes, especially the Nagas.

After the subjugation of the different tribes in the valley by the Meiteis, the conditions of relative territorial security probably led to the adoption of permanent cultivation by the valley dwellers. The higher yields of this new form of agriculture must have led to the production of a surplus which freed a section of the population from food production and resulted in the division of labor and the specialization of activities. Under such conditions, a feudal society arose in the valley.

It is not known exactly when the various Naga groups moved in or were differentiated, if at all they were differentiated, from the early migrants of whom the Meitei are a segment. Different Naga groups have legends tracing their origin to areas south and northwest
of Manipur (Brown 1874; Kabui 1976). According to one tradition, the Nagas lived in the valley for some time before being driven to the hills by the heat and the mosquitoes in the valley (Hodson 1911).

Most Kuki tribes claim to have come from various places to the south of Manipur. The term "Kuki" was used by the British to denote various tribes that were successively driven from the Lushai and Chin hills into the surrounding areas to the north and east, namely, Manipur and the Cachar district of Assam. The earlier immigrants, such as the Aimol, Anal and Chiru, are generally distinguished as the "Old Kukis" (Damant 1880; Shakespear 1912; Lehman 1963); whereas the later migrants such as the Thadous, the major group to have moved in later, are called the "New Kukis" (Shakespear 1912; Shaw 1928). The so-called "New Kukis" drove the "Old Kukis" out of the Lushai hills, and were afterwards themselves driven out during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and again between 1840 and 1850 by the Lushais under their great chief Lallula (Grierson, 1903; Shakespear 1912). Several of the newer Kuki groups arrived in Manipur after even the British, and these migrations continued well into the present century. Mackenzie (1884:171) mentioned several instances of such migrations, such as the following:

In 1877-78 ... parties to number of over 2000 persons ... migrated during the year into Manipur territory, where they settled down on lands assigned to them by the Maharajah in the neighbourhood of Moirang to the south-west of the

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According to Shakespear (1912:149), the Chirus and Anals are mentioned in the Manipur chronicles as early as the middle of the sixteenth century and the Aimols are recorded in 1723.
valley ... Their object in leaving their country was simply to find a place where they might live in peace and security.

British authorities (Fryer 1875; Carey and Tuck 1896; Hutton 1921) have generally ascribed a northern origin somewhere in Tibet or China to the Tibeto-Burman peoples of the region (Fig. 3.7). Tribal folklore refers to "Sinlung" as the original home of several of the tribes of Manipur. Roy Burman (1970) tentatively identified it as being the present Sinlung in the Yunaan province of China, bordering the Shan area of upper Burma. Starting with a westerly movement from the source area, successive waves of the original people are believed to have branched out in different directions on reaching the headwaters of the Irrawady and Chindwin rivers, spreading out to inhabit Tibet, Assam, and the hill ranges between Burma and Assam (Smith 1925:170). The peoples of Manipur belong to the stream of migrants who moved down along the Chindwin until they were obstructed by the Bay of Bengal, from where they turned around and began their northward migration to the Chin and Lushai hills (Fryer 1875), and then into Manipur. The main reasons for these migrations appear to have

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12 Most tribal legends of the region ascribe a subterranean origin to themselves (Hodson 1911; Shakespear 1912c, 1922; Shaw 1928). At some time in the distant past, they emerged through a cave or a "hole in the earth," the mouth of which was covered by a very heavy stone slab, and the exit was guarded by a tiger who killed and ate whoever tried to get out. The folk tales describe the different tricks and strategies that the earliest ancestors used to either escape the tiger or kill it. These legends are perhaps reminiscent of times when these people may have been cave dwellers. Enough archaeological work has not been conducted in the Manipur hills to support this theory, but the cave dwelling period could even have been before they arrived in Manipur.
Figure 3.7 Migration Routes of the Tibeto-Burman Population of India
been a search for suitable land in the wake of constant invasions by the following waves of migrants.

Although today almost the entire indigenous population of Manipur belongs to the Indo-Chinese subgroup of Mongoloid type, speaking languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family, Dalton (1872) considered it highly probable that the area had once been occupied by Aryan people. In support of this contention, he drew attention to the fact that "the present population of Manipur includes a tribe called Meiung who speak a language of Sanskrit derivation. They are now in a servile condition performing duties of grass cutters to their conquerors" (Dalton 1872:55). Although it is possible that a section of the Kshatriyas mentioned by Phayre (1883) settled down in Manipur instead of going on to Burma, it seems more probable that Dalton was referring to the Bishnupurias of the Manipur valley who were earlier known as mayang.\textsuperscript{13} The term mayang, which means "outsiders" or "people from the west," is now applied mainly to the Marwari businessmen and other settlers from mainland India, that

\textsuperscript{13} There is considerable controversy about who exactly the Bishnupurias are. Roy Burman (1970:103) believed they were descendants of prisoners of war brought by the Manipuri kings from Cachar, Assam, in the early part of the seventeenth century. Traditionally, the Bishnupurias do not marry with the Meiteis, and speak a language that is Sanskritic and has a strong affinity with Bengali and Assamase. Allen (1905:53), however, was of the opinion that they were perhaps the descendants of 120 Hindu families of different castes who were brought to Manipur by the King Gharib Nawaz in the latter half of the eighteenth century to teach the newly converted inhabitants of the valley the customs of the Hindus, and that at least for some time they intermarried with the Meiteis until the latter started thinking of them as being inferior. Another legend claims that the Bishnupurias are the illegitimate descendants of a Manipuri king (Allen 1905).
is, all people from parts of India other than the northeast, who came and settled in Manipur at different times over the last two or three hundred years ago. Some of these earlier mayang settlers came with the British to serve them as clerks, cooks, domestics, peons and soldiers. Johnstone (1896:92), who was Political Agent in Manipur for ten years from 1877, described his retinue of assistants and servants and claimed that he was "determined to teach and train up a staff of [local] servants so as to save the necessity of importing the scum of Calcutta." The arrival of outsiders in Manipur is thus linked with the arrival of the British.

Establishment of British Control

The British, who came to India early in the seventeenth century to trade, stayed on to extend their political control over the entire country. Despite the proximity of the northeastern region to the British headquarters in Bengal, they showed no inclination to annex it. The first direct intervention occurred in 1792 when the king of Assam appealed to the British to help him quell persistent raids being made by a neighboring group (Chakravorty 1964). Soon after their mission was accomplished, the British withdrew. This policy of non-interference was, perhaps, a result of the complacency of the British, who envisioned no serious threat by an imperial power on the northeastern frontier of the country. The mountainous tracts of the northwestern frontier, on the other hand, although perhaps poorer in exploitable resources, were a major concern because of a perceived threat from the expansionist empire of Tsarist Russia.
Historically, there appears to have been greater political interaction between Manipur and Burma than between Manipur and the other "civilized" kingdoms of the northeastern region viz., Cachar, Sylhet, Tripura and Assam. The chronicles of the Ava and Shan states of Burma, and later historical records, indicate repeated invasions of Manipur by the Burmese (Roy 1958). The Manipuris occasionally retaliated—whenever they had a powerful king at the helm. Several expeditions against the Burmese occurred during the reign of the king Gharib Nawaz. After his death in the middle of the eighteenth century, royalty in Manipur was riddled with internal dissensions. In the absence of a powerful government in Manipur, the Burmese invaded the territory several times between 1755 and 1826 (Dun 1886; Roy 1958). The declining power of the Ahom kingdom in Assam, and their own successes in Manipur, encouraged the Burmese to venture further afield.

The rapid growth of Burmese power, especially in the early part of the nineteenth century, caused grave concern to the British. In 1817, the Burmese invaded Assam and placed an Assamese on the throne as their nominee (Roy 1958). They invaded again in 1821 when this figure head ruler turned against them. The Burmese extended their raids to areas directly adjacent to the British territories in eastern India. In fact, "no territory was then left outside the eastern frontier of British India, to be conquered by Burma" (Roy 1958:71). The British finally declared war against Burma in February 1824, which ended two years later with the signing of the Treaty of
Yandaboo. The Burmese withdrew their claim to Manipur which they had virtually annexed, and it became an independent state once again.

As a result of the First Anglo-Burmese war, the British realized the importance of the location of Manipur. It was the gateway to the eastern frontier of the British empire in India, and to protect their territory from further encroachments, it was necessary to protect Manipur. The British, thus, cast aside their earlier indifference and agreed to help the Manipuris. During the Anglo-Burmese war, the deposed king of Manipur had helped enlist troops for the Manipur Levy whose training and expenses were the responsibility of the British (Roy 1958).

The period immediately following the First Anglo-Burmese war was one of greatly increased British presence in the entire north-eastern region of India. Initially, they set up military and civil establishments in the Brahmaputra valley, although later they were

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14 The first formal agreement between the government of Manipur and the British government of India was reached in 1762 when the Manipuri king appealed for British help in recovering Manipuri territory wrested by Burma. The Manipuris agreed to pay for the military assistance, and also promised to provide rent-free land to build a fort and a factory. The agreement, however, never reached fruition.

15 The period following the First Anglo-Burmese war was also a period of great literary activity, because "officials had all the excitement of breaking new ground and the Asiatic Society of Bengal opened the pages of its journal to them and encouraged them to write" (Elwin 1969:199). The writings include official reports, tour diaries, descriptions of routes and of landscape, ethnographies, linguistic studies, and miscellaneous notes. Some of these earlier writings are now rare and, thus, difficult to obtain. Elwin, however, provided excerpts from some of this rare material in his two excellent anthologies, India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century (1959) and The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century (1969). Some
also extended into the hills. Several expeditions were sent into the hills, in the early days, to reconnoiter the new frontier. Some of these missions were, however, punitive. Their purpose was to put a stop to the frequent tribal raids on villages in the Brahmaputra valley; to punish the tribals for killing members of the various exploratory and punitive expeditions sent into the hills; and to end the frequent intertribal and intervillage warfare, which was widespread among the hill tribes (Mackenzie 1884).

After the war, the British officers of the Levy stayed on in Manipur. In 1835 one of them, Captain Gordon, was appointed as the first "Political Agent" at the court of Manipur, whose role was to act as an ambassador of the Indian government, to keep his government informed about the political situation in the frontier state, to advise the king in matters that affected the sovereignty of the state, and to provide military assistance to maintain order and to protect the state from further invasions. Manipur thus became a protectorate of British India, but in 1891 the British took over effective control of administration in the state although allowing it the status of a native state.

The material covers wide areas within the larger region, some focuses on a small area or a particular group of people. Manipur and its peoples receive from extensive to brief mention in some of the works, none in others. Then there are also articles, books, reports and monographs devoted entirely to Manipur (Pemberton 1835; McCulloch 1859; Brown 1874; Dun 1886; Watt 1887; Allen 1905; Hodson 1901, 1905, 1908, 1911; Shakespear 1909, 1912a, 1912b, 1912c, 1922, Bower 1939, 1950).
Arrival of Outsiders

Allen (1905:136), in his Gazetteer of Manipur, provided a table on birthplace according to which 281,222 persons (or 99 percent of the population) were born within the state, 645 in Assam, 602 in Bengal, 1161 in the United Provinces, 525 in Nepal and 310 elsewhere. Whereas some of the persons born outside the state could have been the children of Manipuris who fled to escape the frequent Burmese invasions of Manipur in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Roy 1958; Allen 1905) but perhaps returned to their homeland when peace was restored, others were obviously natives of other states who came to Manipur to earn a living. The number of mayang immigrants increased sharply during World War II when they moved in as contractors and petty businessmen to build roads and provide stores and supplies to the Allied Forces hurriedly posted in the region to ward off the Japanese invasion of India. The partition of India in 1947, and the creation of an independent Bangladesh in 1971, resulted in Bengali refugees settling in the Barak basin of Manipur, and adding to the mayang component of the rural population.

The 525 persons born in Nepal noted by Allen (1905:137) as living in Manipur were mainly soldiers of the Gurkha battalion of the Assam Rifles that was stationed in Manipur by the British around the end of the nineteenth century (Shakespear 1929).

In the Census report of 1921, Hutton noted that the Brahmaputra valley was being colonized by Nepalis who came in originally as graziers and dairymen but were beginning to settle as cultivators in many parts. He predicted that this influx would
increase, which it did particularly after World War I when some of the Gurkha units of the British Army were disbanded. The discharged soldiers were reluctant to return home because they felt they could make a better living in India. Bruce (1928:xxvii) quoted the explanation offered by a Gurkha soldier: "The whole question is this, it is one Chépti paisa (½ d) against one rupee, and the rupee will always win."

Most of the Nepalis, other than those who manned the Gurkha Rifles in Imphal, came to Manipur, too, as graziers and dairymen. They came mainly along the Dimapur-Imphal route, and settled in the foothills north of the valley. In time, they started cultivating tribal lands as tenants or share croppers. Gradually they acquired land of their own mainly by lending money to their tribal landlords who, being unfamiliar with the money economy, were often unable to pay back the cash and settled their debts by transferring their lands to their creditors.

Over the years, the number of Nepalis in Manipur has kept growing. In 1951, there were only 2,800 Nepalis in the state, 851 of whom claimed to be migrants (Census of India 1971, 1977b:28-29). The remaining 1,949 persons could very reasonably be expected to be the descendants of the 525 migrants noted by Allen in 1905, and subsequent migrants. In 1961, however, the number of Nepalis in Manipur was 13,571, an increase of 328 percent in ten years! In 1971, their numbers almost doubled to 26,495, and at present they are estimated to have crossed the 70,000 mark. This dramatic growth of the Nepali
population certainly does not reflect a natural increase but is the result of large scale illegal immigration.

INTERETHNIC CONFLICT

The massive influx of refugees and immigrants and a competition for gaining control of scarce resources among the different ethnic groups is at the root of the current problems in much of the politically troubled northeastern region of India (Sarin 1980; Nibedon 1981). For example, the trouble brewing in Assam for the past five years, which culminated in the massacre of thousands of men, women and children early in 1983, had its roots in the resentment of native Assamese against the Bengalis, both from the Indian state of West Bengal and refugees from Bangladesh who, it seemed, would outnumber the Assamese in their own state in the very near future (Dubashi and Sen 1983; Kalbag 1983). In Tripura, shortage of land because of a rapidly increasing population has caused clashes between the tribals and the Bengalis who constitute the two major ethnic groups in the state (Gan-Chaudhuri 1980). In Arunachal Pradesh, the arrival of large numbers of non-Assamese refugees from Assam is causing concern among the native tribal population.

Manipur, which forms the focus of this study, is beset with a very complex set of hostilities. The insurgency, violence, and frequent attacks on government facilities and police personnel by the guerillas, are expressions of the deepseated hostilities and discontentment of the people of the state. The rebels are mostly members of the Chinese-backed People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the
People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Manipur's historical name), but the PLA has gradually gained the sympathy of most Manipuris. The conflict in Manipur broadly exists at four levels: tribals versus nontribals; inter-tribal; nontribals versus mayang or outsiders; and tribals and nontribals versus foreigners.

**Tribals versus Nontribals**

Historically, the inhabitants of the valley had always considered themselves culturally superior to the head hunting hill men. The Meiteis cultivated the fertile land of the central valley and led a reasonably prosperous and economically secure existence. The hill tribes, on the other hand, were swidden farmers; during crop failures they would occasionally raid Meitei villages.\(^{16}\) Although the different tribal groups were politically autonomous, they granted the king of the valley limited acquiescence and paid him a yearly tribute. The Meitei king, however, had no right to meddle in the internal affairs of the various tribal groups (Roy 1958).

In the first half of the eighteenth century, during the reign of the Manipuri king Gharib Nawaz, Shantidas Adhikari, a Hindu missionary from Bengal, converted the king to Vaishnavite Hinduism.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) The raids on Meitei villages appear to have been head-hunting rather than granary-raiding sprees. According to Hutton (1928a:402-3), souls of the dead are associated with fertility of crops and since the soul was believed to reside in the head, the more heads taken would ensure greater crop fertility.

\(^{17}\) The exact dates of Gharib Nawaz's rule and of the Hindu missionary's arrival in Manipur are not known. Gharib Nawaz is supposed to have ascended the throne sometime between 1709 and 1714 A.D. and ruled for thirty-five to forty years (Roy 1958).
Gharib Nawaz is believed to have declared this new religion as the state religion.¹⁸ In fact, some Meiteis believed that this was a process of revival of Hinduism which had been practiced since the times of the Mahabharata, but which later fell into abeyance (Dun 1886). This religious superiority over the "heathens" of the hills, was brandished by the Meiteis until very recently. After the independence of India, the sense of affiliation of the Meiteis with the new rulers of the country became quite strong. Over the past few years, however, there has been a sudden change in trend, and now a counter movement wants to revive the old animistic Sanamahi religion of the Meiteis and also to revert to the original Manipuri script which had been abandoned in favor of the Bengali script (Das 1982; Saha 1982). Babies being born these days are given old Meitei names rather than Hindu names that had been so popular in the past. Madhu Singh would now rather name his son Iboton than Suruchandra.

The reason for this reversal appears to be the feeling among the Meiteis that they have been deprived of their traditional superiority. Because of the special privileges, such as reservations of jobs and scholarships granted to the tribes by the Indian constitution, and the special funds allotted by the government for the development of tribal areas, the Meiteis fear that the tribals will

¹⁸The popular belief among many scholars of Manipur history is that Gharib Nawaz coerced his subjects into accepting Hinduism, and those who resisted were treated with ruthless severity (McCulloch 1859; Hodson 1908; Manipuri sources quoted by Roy 1958: 42, 48; Saha 1982).
soon overtake them in economic superiority and political power. Whereas special favors were also granted to the neighboring tribes of Nagaland and Assam for fear that they might break away from the Indian republic, the Meiteis feel that they were taken for granted by the Indian government because of their religious affiliation. This revivalist movement is, thus, aimed at freeing themselves from the religious domination of mainland Hinduism, and claiming certain privileges by displaying their political tenuousness.

While the Meiteis feel that they are the aggrieved, the tribals have several grievances against the Meiteis. As has happened in tribal areas all over India, the nontribals have moved in to exploit the natural resources of the tribal areas. In Manipur, the Meiteis have been extracting valuable timber and other forest products from the forests which rightfully belong to the tribals. Besides, the tribals claim that government funds meant for the development of the hill areas are being misappropriated by the Meiteis who largely control the running of the state government because the capital of the state is located in the valley.

The tribals also resent the domination of the Meiteis in the State Legislative Assembly. At present, out of the sixty Legislature seats, only nineteen are represented by tribal legislators from the hills. The hills comprise 91 percent of the area and five districts of the state, whereas the valley comprises only one district and 9 percent of the area. The hill men contend that representation should not be on the basis of population alone, but should also take the geographic area into account.
Intertribal Conflict

While the tribals are one in their desire to shake off Meitei domination, they are not really united among themselves. Although, at present there are twenty-seven officially recognized tribes in Manipur, there are a number of small groups and sub-groups like the Baite and Tarao, who consider themselves to be independent entities. There are continual alignments and realignments of various groups going on all the time which are not reflected in the census data.

The Naga and the Kuki tribes bear each other a long standing feeling of animosity since the time when the Kukis raided Naga villages in search of land on which to settle (Shakespear 1912c). The Nagas have been demanding integration of their area with the northern state of Nagaland; the Kukis, who now identify themselves with the Mizo tribes of the adjoining southeastern state of Mizoram, have been demanding the creation of a Greater Mizoram that would include the Kuki areas of Manipur. The tribes inhabiting the transition zone between the clearly defined Naga areas in northern half of the Manipur hills and the Kuki area in the southern half, have been vacillating in regard to their identification with the two groups. They tilt whichever way seems more advantageous to them at any given time.

Another section among the Naga and the Kuki/Mizo tribes does not favor the idea of amalgamation with either Nagaland or Mizoram because they fear that they will be considered as second class citizens by the present inhabitants of these two states. This
section among the tribals has been demanding a separate hill state of Manipur, cut off from the central valley inhabited by the Meiteis.

Nontribals versus the "Mayang"

The *mayang* or nontribals from other states of India, moved into Manipur during World War II as contractors to build roads and provide stores to the military units that had been hastily posted in the area to counter the Japanese invasion of India. After the war the *mayang* stayed on as building contractors and traders, to provide services that the local Meiteis until then were not capable of providing. The Meiteis, who are now not as isolated from the rest of the country as they were forty year ago, feel greatly exploited and economically threatened by the *mayang* traders, and want them to leave so that they may dominate trading.

The *mayang* have been a major target of the urban guerrilla attacks in the valley since the outbreak of violence in the valley in 1980. They have often been attacked in broad daylight and their property burned and damaged. There has been mass exodus of the families of the *mayang* traders, while the men have stayed back to try and salvage and protect their businesses into which they have invested a significant part of their lives (Hindustan Times, 5 May, 1980).

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19 The Japanese army accompanied by the "Azad Hind Fauj" organized by the militant Indian leader Subhash Chandra Bose, who was both anti-British and anti-Gandhi, entered India through Manipur and reached as far as Kohima in Nagaland, before they were finally defeated by the Allied Forces.
Tribals and Nontribals versus Foreigners

The foreigners, in Manipur, are primarily the Nepalis. There are some refugees from Bangladesh who settled in the Jiribam subdivision bordering Assam, but their numbers are relatively small and they are not the target of the present agitation. The Nepalis first came to Manipur in 1885 as members of the Gurkha Rifles which was stationed there by the British (Chaudhuri 1980). Most of the Nepalis living in the state should therefore be either veterans of the Gurkha Rifles or their descendents. The growth of the Nepali population, however, has far exceeded what one would expect to be a natural increase of population. From 2,800 in 1951, their figures swelled to 13,571 in 1961—an increase of 382 percent. In 1971 their number almost doubled. According to the provisional estimates of the 1981 census their present population should be about 70,000. This means that large numbers of Nepalis have been smuggling themselves into the state.

Most of the Nepalis are engaged in cultivation. In the early days they started cultivating lands belonging to the tribals, and in return either paid taxes to the owners or shared the crop. Since 1971, they have stopped paying taxes on the ground that the land belongs to the government.

Because the Nepalis are hard working and thrifty, they have been giving large sums of money as loans to their landlords. The landlords find it very difficult to pay back the money, and finally discharge their debts by transferring the ownership of the land to
their Nepali creditors. This happens despite the law under which no tribal land may be transferred without the sanction of the authorities. 20

Another item about which the tribals are very sensitive is that the Nepalis have been given preferential treatment by the authorities by allowing them to take on lease forest land for grazing their cattle while the tribals are not.

Of late the Nepalis have also become politically active and since 1973, their representatives have been elected to the State Legislature (Chaudhuri 1980). This growing improvement in the numbers, and the economic and political conditions of the Nepalis has bred a feeling of insecurity and resentment among the tribals and, where the Meiteis are affected, among the Meiteis as well. The number of Nepalis has been rapidly increasing as more and more manage to smuggle themselves in. A natural corollary to the growth of population of the Nepalis has not only been the progressive encroachment on forest and local tribal land, and in some cases also non-tribal land, but also the sharing of the available resources with the local population.

The Meiteis and the tribals, mainly the Kukis who are the major group affected, have been demanding the expulsion of all those who arrived after 1951. What makes the situation complex is the fact that quite a few of the Nepalis living in the state have come not

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20 The law referred to is the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act of 1960, and the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (Amendment No. 2) Bill of 1976.
from Nepal but mainly from West Bengal and are thus bona fide citizens of India.

The problem in each case, and at every level, whether among various tribal groups, between tribals and nontribals, or between the nontribals and the mayang and the tribals/nontribals and foreigners is, therefore, not one of confrontation between different ethnic groups but rather a problem of threatened economies resulting from disparate levels of development and modernization, and that such a conflict also has a distinctive geographical dimension. This is the basic premise of the present study. The following chapters seek to determine and understand these differences.
CHAPTER 4

PATTERNS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Development in any society occurs in two ways: as a result of a society's internal mechanism of adapting to pressures from within, or as a result of pressures and ideas from outside. For the penetration and spread of exogenous influences and ideas, the presence of a channel of communication is a basic requirement. But once a new idea, innovation or technique is available, it is not necessary that the society will accept and adopt it. The adoption or rejection of a new idea depends on several factors such as the internal pressure for change, internal perceptions of the advantages of adoption, and earlier experience with adoption or rejection (Knight 1971; Wilbanks 1981). Often the decision to adopt a new innovation is also influenced by economic considerations (N. Allan 1984).

The building of roads, the major channels of communication, was started in Manipur by the British to ensure ease of movement of soldiers in times of war and internal rebellion, and of men of the establishment on their reconnoitering, goodwill, and tax-collecting missions during times of peace (Johnstone 1896; Shakespear 1929). The Indian government has continued this activity of road building, although at a slow pace, as a means of bringing development to remote areas (NCAER 1961; Government of Manipur 1980). These roads have
provided the lines of communication and of human interaction that are necessary for the spread of exogenous influences. Along these roads, in recent years, have come immigrants, extension workers, government officials, and exploiters of local resources. Also, along these roads redistribution of population has taken place within the state. There have been some carriers of change who did not need roads to reach the most isolated hamlets and villages---the Christian missionaries who were moved and motivated by an intense devotion to their cause.

Increased contacts, interaction and exposure to outside influences, as well as the operation of the adaptive mechanisms of societies of responding to and coping with internal pressures, have intensified the process of transformation all over Manipur. This chapter explores the changes that have taken place in certain social and economic aspects of development, namely, agriculture, the occupational structure, the literacy status of the people, and their access to infrastructural amenities, in different areas and among different ethnic groups in Manipur.

AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Subsistence agriculture is the primary activity of a majority of the population in Manipur, regardless of their ethnicity (the mayang being the only exception). Fig. 4.1 shows the percentage of workers in each village engaged in agricultural activity, and Fig. 4.2 illustrates the situation with regard to the state average. The valley dwellers cultivate wet rice fields, while the hill dwellers
MANIPUR

CULTIVATORS
AS PERCENT OF TOTAL WORKERS, 1971

Figure 4.1
MANIPUR

CULTIVATORS, 1971

Figure 4.2
are still largely shifting cultivators. A subsistence system is basically a set of strategies and technologies with which humans modify and exploit their environment to procure food (Nietschmann 1973). Any change in the requirement of food by a human group, or in the capacity of the environment to supply it, is regulated through the mechanism of the subsistence system.

During the past few decades, some significant changes in agricultural practices and operations have occurred which have been partly the cause and partly the result of certain processes of development. The two major change-inducing processes involved have been population growth resulting in an increased pressure on existing resources, and increased interaction resulting from improvements in accessibility.

Kundstadter and Chapman (1978) have identified two contrasting but valid theories of the relationship between population growth and economic development. According to one theory, popularly known as the neo-Malthusian theory, rapid population growth is a result of economic development, but after a point the demands of a growing population begin to offset gains in productivity and population growth starts hampering further development. The other theory states that population growth is a necessary pre-condition for economic development, because the pressure of a burgeoning population forces development of more productive economic systems (Boserup 1965). Elements of both these theories can help explain the processes and patterns of socio-economic change in Manipur. But to be able to understand the nature of these changes, it is necessary to
first understand the traditional modes of production practiced in the
hills and in the valley.

SHIFTING CULTIVATION--A BACKGROUND

The dominant form of production activity in the Manipur hills
is shifting cultivation, known locally as jhum. According to a
minimal definition offered by Conklin (1963:2) shifting cultivation
is "any continuing agricultural system in which clearings are cropped
for shorter periods in years than they are followed." This form of
farming involves the planting of fields with crops and working them
for a few years until the soil begins to lose its fertility, infes­
tation of pests and weeds increases, agricultural productivity begins
to decline, and the input of labor goes up (Spencer 1966; Watters
1971; Denevan 1978). The land is then abandoned and allowed to lie
fallow for several years to let the vegetation regenerate and the
soil regain its fertility, while another patch of land is cleared of
its natural vegetation. The vegetation is cut and allowed to dry and
is then set on fire. Burning kills many pests and destroys the seeds
of potential weeds. The ashes which are rich in plant nutrients,
provide a fertile bed in which seeds and tubers are sown.

This system of shifting cultivating, or swidden, is found in
tropical rain forest areas all over the world: in parts of Central
and South America, Africa, south and southeast Asia, and Melanesia.
It is known by different names in different areas, such as milpa in
Central America, ladang in Indonesia, taungya in Burma, podu in
central India, and jhum in northeast India. Most areas where swidden is practiced are characterized by high temperatures, high rainfall, and a mild winter, and they may or may not have a well marked dry season. Apart from these few common characteristics, there is great diversity in the types of landforms and soils on which this form of cultivation is practiced. An upland setting appears to be the favored locale in the southeast Asian region (of which northeast India may be considered a part) mainly due to demographic and technological considerations. In other words, an interaction between sparse populations of technologically simple human groups and vast stretches of rugged terrain in tropical areas has generally resulted in the emergence of shifting cultivation as the dominant system of subsistence.

In ecological terms, the system of shifting cultivation is remarkably well suited to the tropical rain forest areas mainly because a swidden plot tends to replicate the generalized nature of the forest which it temporarily replaces (Geertz 1963). A typical swidden field, well adapted to the ecosystem, contains trees, tubers, root crops, and vines, as well as other vegetable and grain crops, thereby providing a "closed-cover" structure similar to that provided by the forest itself. The thick vegetation cover deflects both rain and sunlight and thus protects the soil from excessive leaching, baking, laterization, and erosion. Swidden farming has, therefore, been aptly described as a system in which "a natural forest is transformed into a harvestable forest" (Kampto Utomo 1957:129, quoted in Geertz 1963:25).
Swidden cultivators are generally skilled environmental managers, very knowledgeable about the local climatic conditions, soil types, plants and pests. Although the details of swidden techniques may differ in different areas and under changing conditions (Conklin 1954), the food procurement techniques of shifting cultivators, under favorable conditions, result in swidden plots that are stable biomes. Normally, there are some crops in a swidden field at all times of the year so that the soil is never completely exposed. A new patch of land is generally cleared and sown before the older one is finally abandoned. By the time the last crop is harvested from the old field, certain weeds, grasses and secondary vegetation have already taken over.

Street (1969), Clarke (1973), and others have, however, refuted the popular belief that technologically simple cultures exist in perfect harmony with nature. Clarke (1973:284) claimed that "their innate human capacity and desire to change their environment is as great as that of technologically advanced peoples," but that they lack the power to do it on the same scale. This desire leads to what Geertz (1963) considered "prodigal and inept" agricultural practices. He considered these practices important indicators not only of the differences in the agricultural proficiency of different groups of shifting cultivators, but also the role of social, cultural
and psychological variables, in addition to environmental ones, in determining the stability of human modes of adaptation.¹

The most significant factor contributing to a breakdown of this otherwise ecologically sound agricultural system is the growth of population. As long as enough land is available to a human group either within its own territory or adjacent to it, the presence of a growing population is absorbed by expansion of the area under cultivation. Where unused or unclaimed land is not available, expansion into the territory claimed by other groups is frequently the alternative, resulting in warfare (Vayda 1961; Spencer 1966).² Where expansion is not possible, shifting cultivators generally resort to intensification techniques, the first step commonly being a shortening of the fallow period.

Shifting cultivation is an ecologically sound practice only as long as the area cultivated at any one time is only a small proportion of the total area available for cultivation so that a short period of cultivation (one to two years) is followed by a fairly long period of fallow. Denevan (1978) considered more than 20 years to be an adequately long fallow, but recognized that stable short fallow

¹The reasons for the inept and wasteful methods of shifting cultivation pointed out by Geertz (1963) include a historically rooted conviction of the availability of unlimited tracts of forest, gross indifference toward agricultural proficiency, and the view that natural resources exist only to be exploited.

²Based on examples from Maori traditional history, Vayda (1961) pointed out that territorial conquests often resulted because the conquest and preparation of the previously used land of the vanquished often required considerably less time and effort than the clearing of virgin land within one's own territory.
systems are fairly common in parts of Asia and Africa among shifting cultivators who know and understand their habitats and have adjusted their subsistence systems in accordance to the limitations of the environment. Swidden systems are, however, very delicately balanced ecologically and progressive shortening of the fallow can lead to a break down of the stable cyclical equilibrium (Geertz 1963). Frequent cultivation of the swidden fields without adequate rest for forest regeneration leads to a scantier secondary growth and a change in the composition of the regrowth, an increase in soil erosion, a depletion of soil nutrients, a change in soil structure, increase in weeds and pests, a decline in yields per unit area, and also a decline in labor productivity.

Anthropologists, geographers, and other social scientists have been concerned with determining the carrying capacity of communities of shifting cultivators, or the critical limit of population size beyond which environmental degradation sets in (W. Allan 1949; Conklin 1959; Carneiro 1960; Gourou 1966; Hunter 1966). The variables commonly used in the computations of this critical limit include population size, area of cultivable land available, number of productive years per plot, number of fallow years, and land requirements per capita. Clarke (1971:190), however, argued that

...carrying capacity should be thought of as a gradient rather than a critical limit. Any change in population density along the gradient will prompt environmental change; at most points along the gradient some environmental change will be going on, even if the population remains constant. It follows that measurement of carrying capacity requires knowledge not only of length of actual fallow and cropping period, the amount of land needed to feed each person, and the total land available, but also the rate of the process of erosion, leaching, retrogression of vegetation and changing yields.
Porter (1978) criticized most methods of studying population pressure and carrying capacity for not accounting for links outside the system and considered most models ahistorical. Brush (1975) stressed that the value of the concept of carrying capacity lay mainly in its descriptive and heuristic uses.

Population pressure essentially represents a relationship between population and resources (Hoy 1978), and "much of the historical development of agricultural techniques the world over appears to be a series of attempts to increase the carrying capacity of the available land area in response to population pressure" (Wilkinson 1973:16). Development, in the ecological context, is thus the emergence of more intensive ways of exploiting the environment to overcome a perceived scarcity of basic resources. Much of the impetus for the intensification of agricultural techniques comes from the growing pressure of population. The methods most readily adopted to overcome resource scarcity, however, are those that are already built into the existing cultural system, such as a change in the cropping sequence (Vermeer 1970), and an increase in multiple cropping (N. Allan 1984).

AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE HILLS

The hills of Manipur were once clothed in a thick cover of a variety of tropical and subtropical vegetation (Brown 1874; Watt 1888). As a result of continuing exploitation by a growing human population, the landscape of the hills has now been considerably modified. What one now sees are small patches of thick forest and
vast stretches of regenerating forest interspersed with jhum fields and bald patches of land cleared for cultivation. Differences in altitude, temperature, rainfall, slope, soil, and the intensity of landuse are responsible for the variety of vegetation that occurs in different parts of the hills. The rainfall generally declines from west to east, averaging nearly 4,500 mm annually on the western flank of the western hills, but decreasing eastward to a minimum of about 1,700 mm (Ansari 1976). Temperatures also tend to decrease from west to east and from north to south along with a decrease in altitude.

According to Holdridge's Life Zone model based on bioclimatic classification which takes into account altitudinal regions on the basis of mean annual bio-temperature, the Manipur hills can be said to have "subtropical moist transitional to warm temperate lower montane moist forests" (Holdridge et al. 1971:10-15). Life Zone determination, however, should be based on long term climatic records which, unfortunately, are not available for Manipur. Hence this classification is, at best, very generalized. There is no comprehensive, up-to-date study available on the forests of Manipur.\(^3\) On the basis of the few sketchy classifications that do exist for the area (NCAER 1961; Birendra Singh 1961; Bhattacharya 1963; Ansari 1976), classifications for neighboring areas which have similar climate and topography (Chatterjee 1958; Puri 1958; Kunstadter et al. 1978), and

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\(^3\)Watt's (1888) study on "The Forests of Manipur" is descriptive but not classificatory, nor is Kingdom-Ward's (1952). The latter's book, Plant Hunter in Manipur, gives a detailed description of the flora of the eastern hills of Manipur, but the focus is more on the flowering varieties than on the different tree species in the forests.
classifications of forest types in general (Richards 1952; UNESCO 1958), the forests of Manipur may be broadly divided into four categories: tropical semi-evergreen; subtropical evergreen; raingreen tropical forests; and subtropical montane forests (Fig. 4.3). Within these broad categories, changes occur in the composition of forests with changes in altitude. Some species drop out while others occur in different proportions at different altitudes. Forests on the hills are thus arranged in definite belts.

The tropical semi-evergreen forests lie on the wet western flank of the western hills, and are composed of hardwood trees such as ironwood, chaplash, bonsum, and chestnuts, with an undergrowth of shrubs, canes, and bamboos. The temperate evergreens cover the northeastern part of the eastern hills and are composed mainly of evergreen broad-leafed trees. Pine trees (Pinus kesiya) are interspersed with oaks, chestnuts and laurels which are replaced by different species of oaks and maples at about 1750 meters. The crests of hills are often covered with grasses. Southwards, as altitude decreases, the chestnuts fade away, the oaks continue and the pines are replaced by the teak trees of the raingreen tropical forests. Bamboos and canes are also widespread. The slopes of the hills surrounding the central valley are largely bereft of trees which were cut over the years to meet the fuel and construction requirements of the valley-dwellers. Further into the hills are the subtropical montane forests, consisting of both evergreen and deciduous trees.
Figure 4.3 Manipur: Forest Types
In these forest environments, jhum is the dominant subsistence activity (Fig. 4.4). The only exceptions are the hills lying north of the central valley, the foothills surrounding it, and the Khuga valley lying in the hills at the southwestern end of the Manipur valley. The reasons for these anomalies are considered later in the chapter. The variety of climatic, edaphic, biotic, and cultural factors resulting from the physical and ethnic diversity in the hills lead to several differences in the methods and techniques of jhum in different parts of the hills. Everywhere, however, jhum involves the five basic steps of shifting cultivation: the selection of the site to be cleared, the cutting of the vegetation at that site, burning of the cut vegetation, cultivation of the cleared patch of land, and fallowing (Conklin 1963).

Traditionally, the decision on the site to be cleared is made by the village elders and the task of clearing and burning the forest is performed jointly by the adult males in the community. Activities related with the actual cultivation of the individual family plots within the cleared patch of forest are usually performed by members of the family. Occasional help from members of the group in activities such as harvesting is common among many of the tribal groups in Manipur. Women contribute significantly to the cultivation of jhum fields in terms of both their participation in the activity of cultivation and the diversity of activities they perform. In fact, after the men fell the trees and burn the vegetation, the majority of the remaining tasks are performed exclusively by women. They prepare the fields by spreading the ashes evenly and removing any
Figure 4.4

MANIPUR

AREA UNDER JHUM AS PERCENT
OF TOTAL CULTIVATED AREA, 1971
unburnt material that remains in the field, they plant the tubers
and sow the seeds by either the broadcast method, or by dibbling a
hole in the ground with a pointed stick and putting the seed in each
hole. The women also weed the fields throughout the growing season.
During the harvest, they are helped by the men, and the task of
threshing the grain and transporting the produce back to the village
settlement, too, is often shared by the two sexes. Fig. 4.5 shows
that women cultivators account for between forty and sixty percent of
the total cultivators in the hills, sometimes even more. Even in
villages with a lower proportion of female cultivators, women engaged
in cultivation as a proportion of total women workers in those
villages is fairly high (Fig. 4.6).

While differences in detail do exist, in most parts of the
Manipur hills jhum fields are cultivated for a year or two mainly
with rice, and some subsidiary crops such as yams, mustard greens,
cucumbers and chillies, after which a new patch of land is cleared
and cultivated with the grain crop while the old field is often kept
under the subsidiary crops for another couple of years after which it
is finally abandoned for several years to allow the vegetation to
regenerate and the soil to regain its fertility before the same patch
of land is again put to productive use. The cropping pattern of the
culture group generally determines the length of the occupance cycle
(Spencer 1966). In the period between two successive plantings of
the same field, several other patches of land are cultivated by
rotation. Jhum cultivation, therefore, requires extensive land to
support a small population.
MANIPUR

FEMALE CULTIVATORS AS PERCENT OF TOTAL CULTIVATORS, 1971

Figure 4.5
Figure 4.6

MANIPUR

FEMALE CULTIVATORS AS PERCENT OF FEMALE WORKERS, 1971

Figure 4.6
Settlements in the hills are, thus, generally small and widely spaced, except in the northern part of the state inhabited by some of the Naga tribes such as the Mao, among whom large villages are common (Fig. 4.7). Leach (1949) believed that the large size of villages is a legacy of the past when requirements of effective defense among these constantly warring headhunters necessitated such large agglomerations. Since jhum cultivation could not sustain the populations of such villages, people were induced to adopt more intensive techniques of food production. The Angamis, Maos and Luhupas (northern Tangkhuls) thus carved the hill sides into terraces and adopted permanent cultivation of wet rice a long time before any agriculture extension worker ever set foot in their territory (Brown 1874; Hodson 1901). This predominance of permanent cultivation at the northern end of the Manipur hills is also illustrated in Fig 4.8.

Population pressure has grown very rapidly in Manipur during the past few decades. According to census figures, the average annual growth rate rose from 1.3 percent in the 1940s to 3.5 percent in the 1950s, to 3.8 percent in the 1960s, and to over 4 percent in the early years of the 1970s. The extension of medical facilities

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4According to Leach (1949:28) the large Naga villages were correlated directly with military strength, and he considered the military factor to be the most reasonable explanation for the existence of terraced cultivation. Sopher (1964:123) noted that sometimes intensive exploitation of land "would actually be facilitated by difficulty of access to area, so that in this case, isolation rather than a nodal position of lines of communication would be a significant element in the development of permanent agriculture." As an example he cited the Angamis of Nagaland who lie immediately north of the Maos and are well known for their skill at building excellent terraced fields (Butler 1875).
MANIPUR
TOTAL POPULATION
OF SAMPLED VILLAGES, 1971

Figure 4.7
Figure 4.8
leading to the control of such common diseases as malaria and
dysentery, and the eradication of small pox has, in the past few
decades, led to a significant decrease in both infant and adult
mortality in the valley as well as in the hills. The end of inter
and intra-tribal feuds and wars in the present century have also con­
tributed significantly to population growth in the hills. The large
influx of Nepali immigrants during the past thirty years has further
intensified the population pressure.

Expansion of Cultivated Land

One of the traditional ways of coping with increases in
population was the expansion of area under cultivation. For cen­
turies, there was enough land available in the hills so that when the
population of a village became too large a group of people, often
belonging to the same clan, would move not too far from the parent
village and establish a new settlement on land which was under the
general jurisdiction of the parent village. The upper limit of the
population of a village was set by the distance to the fields. The
fission of villages was more common among the Nagas, and also the

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5 Most groups that practiced shifting cultivation had clear
concepts of the land that "belonged" to them and could descriptively
delimit their boundaries with considerable exactness. "Whether every
part of the owned territory was used for cropping each year within
any time period was not an issue. Such areas formed the productive
territory of the group either for cropping or for appropriative
activities. Traditional occupancy of such areas was the chief basis
for the concept of territorial ownership" (Spencer 1966:76). If the
offshoot village had to be set up on land recognized as belonging to
a village other than the parent village, permission had to be sought
and a token payment made. War generally ensued in case of failure to
comply with these rules.
older "Old Kuki" groups who had settled in Manipur when tracts in the southern hills were still largely uninhabited. The later immigrants lived in smaller villages whose entire population migrated to a new site when the fertility of the old jhum field was depleted. This practice, in some cases, still continues.

The pressure of a growing population has also forced the tribal groups to move down into the intermont valleys which were believed to be infested with the malarial mosquito and were therefore shunned. The large-scale settlement of the Khuga valley in the South district during the past forty or fifty years has been in response to this pressure (Laldena 1976).

**Shortening of Fallow**

Another measure adopted by the jhumias, or the shifting cultivators, to cope with the increasing pressure of population on existing resources is the shortening the fallow period of the jhum cycle. This action, however, has some very undesirable repercussions. Jhum is ecologically a sound practice only as long as the fallow period is long enough to allow the soil fertility to recuperate before it is cleared and cultivated again. A reasonable period of fallowing is believed to be between eight and fifteen years, "depending on the total ecology of the local situation" (Conklin 1954:141). While there are parts of the Manipur hills where the fallow period of the jhum cycle lies within safe limits, over most of the region it has been reduced to between four and six years, and in parts of the hills it is even less than that. Based on the 1971
census data, there exists an inverse correlation \( r = -0.38017 \) between the population size of the village and the period of rotation. Shortening of the fallow period is often also accompanied by lengthening of the period of cropping of each jhum field which results in soil erosion and a sharp decrease in productivity with each successive planting.

In many parts of the hills, the problem caused by shortening the jhum cycle has been further compounded by the arrival of the Meitei forest contractors along the newly built roads. The forest plays an important role in the material life of the tribes: they carry on jhum in the forests and supplement their diet with yams, roots, mushrooms, berries, and small game from the forest. Forests provide them with fuel, materials for building their houses, household furniture and other household items such as rice pounders, chopping blocks, baskets, mats and ropes, and are also the source of medicinal herbs. Forests are thus the grocery store, hardware store, and pharmacy of the tribals. This strong association is also reflected in their cultural beliefs and traditions. Patron goddesses, such as the Kashong-philava and the Thongyang Kameo of the Tangkhuls, are believed to protect certain forests and species of trees and are said to punish anyone who destroys them. These traditional beliefs are restraints to the destruction of the ecological

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The concept of the "mother goddess" is strong among the tribal groups of Manipur, and most patron pantheons of trees, plants, lakes, rocks—elements of the mother earth—generally assume the female form.
balance built into the cultural system. The spread of Christianity, however, eroded these beliefs and resulted in the indiscriminate felling of trees by the tribals themselves.  

The Meitei contractors offered cash for the timber. Since the restraints of traditional beliefs had already been removed, and the tribals were getting involved with monetized economy, the ridiculously low cash offers were often accepted. The government's concern over the widespread destruction of forests as a result of the intensification of shifting cultivation and the indiscriminate extraction of timber by exploiters from the valley led to the implementation of the "Forest Reserves" policy in the hill areas of Manipur. According to this policy, the government takes over parts of the forest and restricts the right to cultivate, extract timber or fuel wood, hunt, and graze. The reserved forests are often planted with valuable species of timber. The area under forest reserves has

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7 Among the Chin groups, too, a similar process occurred. The adoption of Christianity resulted in the loss of fear of evil spirits of the springs and led to the destruction of the large shady trees which animism had preserved over the village springs. This caused the springs to dry up (Stevenson 1943:45).

8 At present there are four categories of forest land in Manipur: 1) Reserved forests that are the government's property with only limited rights of hunting, grazing and collection of wood available to the tribals living in the area; 2) Protected forests, where certain species of trees are declared protected, but the right of the people to jhum is not interfered with; 3) Open reserves, where tribals have the right to jhum but timber can be extracted and sold only by permission; and, 4) Hill village reserves, which cover forest land within a quarter mile radius of a village over which the government exercises no control.
slowly been increasing (Government of Manipur 1978). This well-meaning policy has dispossessed the tribals of some of their lands and has further intensified the problem of land shortage and has contributed to the shortening of the fallow period.

In such a situation the shrinking of swidden land, according to Sopher (1964: 124)

...is not a measure of the inadequacy of swidden as a means of utilizing land but of the relative inefficiency of swidden societies in the political sphere. The choice of those in authority is between teak and men...Governments prefer teak and most swidden cultivators are in no position to sway them.

In Manipur, timber exploitation by Meiteis continues despite the well-meaning government policies because the permits required for extracting wood from the government owned open reserves are granted by petty officials of the Forest department many of whom are themselves Meitei, and corrupt.

Adoption of Permanent Cultivation

A dearth of new land and a declining productivity resulting from a shortening of the cycle of rotation in the hills often leads people to adopt techniques of a more intensive use of land. Since the given level of technology generally does not permit a more intensive use of the difficult terrain in the hills, people start bringing the strips of level land in the intermontane valleys under permanent cultivation. These permanent fields are often cultivated in addition to the jhum fields, jhum still being the primary activity. When these intervening valleys are wide and large enough, entire villages
are often relocated there, in which case the permanent fields in the valleys become the primary source of sustenance, even though some jhum is still carried on in the surrounding hills. Some of the new villages established in the valley, however, are offshoots of a parent village which remains at its hilltop location, and continues with jhum cultivation after the pressure is partially relieved by the migration of a segment of its population.

Population pressure also leads to an incipient form of terracing, especially on the gentler lower slopes, where rough benches are carved out of hillsides and stone walls built to retain the soil (Barthakur 1981). Pseudo-terraces are also built by laying felled trees and logs across the slope (Lehman 1963; Barthakur 1981). Then there are groups such as the Angami and Mao among whom the art of terracing has been mastered almost to perfection. Allen (1905:80) marvelled at the capacity of the Mao, Maram and Tangkhul for the sustained hardwork that they put into the building of their

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9Crests and spurs of hills are the preferred sites for village locations among the indigenous groups in the entire Indo-Burmese mountain system, because, in the past, defensibility was the prime concern (Hodson 1911; Lehman 1963; Sopher 1964). Other reasons cited include the fact that ridges tend to be healthier than valleys. Better air drainage keeps the hill tops clear and dry when valleys are dank with morning fog. In addition to providing esthetic pleasure of a panoramic view, hill tops are believed to be free of flies and mosquitoes—a claim which Sopher (1964:112) considered an exaggeration.

10Laying felled trees across the slope is also the traditional method of retarding soil erosion among most communities of shifting cultivators in northeast India (Roy Burman 1970, 1976; Barthakur 1981), Burma (Lehman 1963), and northern Thailand (Kundstadter et al. 1978).
terraced fields, a capacity "rarely found in a community of semi savages." In 1873 Godwin-Austin recorded that he had "never even in the better-cultivated parts of the Himalayas seen terrace cultivation carried to such perfection, and it gives a peculiarly civilized appearance to the country" (quoted in Elwin 1969:588). Brown (1874b:9) noted that, "The labour incurred in first making these terraces must be very great, and the skill manifested in irrigating them would do credit to a trained engineer."

Wet-rice terraces are able to give much higher crop yields per unit area than a jhum field, even though the productivity per person is significantly lower in this form of agriculture. It is also ecologically much more stable than shifting cultivation and can withstand intense population pressure. According to Geertz (1963:16)

> Any form of agriculture represents an effort to alter a given ecosystem in such a way as to increase the flow of energy to man: but a wet-rice terrace accomplishes this through a bold reworking of the natural landscape; a swidden through an uncanny imitation of it.

During the past two decades agriculture extension agencies have been trying to help the tribals in developing terraces, and several families now cultivate rice on their terraced fields, but continue to grow other crops such as fruits, vegetables, and cotton on their jhum fields. But there have been instances where extension workers have helped build terraces but not irrigation channels to provide water to those fields. In most such cases, the people went back to jhum after cultivating the terraced field for a year or two; despite greater input of human energy, the productivity in the unirrigated terraced land was found to be lower than that in the jhum
fields (Mathur, no date:6). Incorrect cutting of terraces, which displaces fertile top soil, has also been responsible for low yields (Barthakur 1981). Such negative experiences, as well as the expense involved in building terraces, have prevented people from adopting terracing more rapidly.\footnote{The Manipur government provides a subsidy to the tribals to partially meet the cost of building terraces. In 1976, the estimated cost of terracing one hectare of land was at least Rs. 4000, while the government subsidy was only Rs. 1500 (Roy Burman 1976). Most tribals did not have the capital required, and were thus unable to participate in the project.}

This imposed system of terraced cultivation has not proved as successful as the indigenously evolved system of some of the Naga tribes. Rejection and nonadoption of new methods are often a result of the inability or unwillingness of the people to cope with alien concepts. The extension workers recommend the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. The indigenous terrace cultivators, such as the Angamis, extend traditional concepts to their terraced fields; they tether cattle in their terraces during the fallow season, and use a method of burning the undergrowth to destroy weeds and pests which resembles the firing process of the jhum (Hutton 1921:74; Barthakur 1981:457).

The adoption of permanent cultivation, whether on terraces or on flat valley floors, leads to significant changes in the traditional way of life and induces social and cultural adjustments complementary to the changed situation. One of the important changes has occurred in the system of ownership of land.
Since shifting cultivation historically developed under conditions of plentiful land, the social structure associated with it theoretically lacks the class division that arises from a competition to control scarce resources (Wilkinson 1973). Among shifting cultivators, therefore, ownership of land is generally held in common by the entire village community. Land tenure, among most groups, "involves the concept of a private right to the use of land to produce crops during a recognized cropping cycle only...[and] does not extend to the land itself" (Spencer 1966:88). Differences in detail may exist depending on the socio-political organization of the individual group. Two broad systems of land tenure exist among the hill tribes of Manipur: the Naga system and the Kuki system. The Nagas, who arrived while there was still abundant land in the Manipur hills, tend to be democratically organized under an elected headman; the Kukis whose migrations during the past several centuries have been a result of intense competition for land are more autocratic. The actual situation, however, often differs from tribe to tribe and even from village to village within the same tribe.

A three-tier system of land control exists among the Nagas, which applies to three different categories of land. Each village has a clearly identifiable boundary, and all the land lying within

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12 This section is mainly based on information collected in the field in 1979.
those bounds is community land. The village chief is the titular head of this land. Distinct tracts of land within the community land are controlled by each lineage group, or "clan", in the village. Only a part of each clan land is cleared collectively by the members of that clan for cultivation in each cropping cycle. Within the clan clearing, the head of each family can claim an individual plot, the size of which is determined by the size of the family. The head of the clan is the titular owner of the clan land and in some cases, such as in None in the West district, he imposes a levy for the use of the land on each family. This levy or rent is paid in tins of rice. But this is not a very common practice among most Naga groups. The tracts of clan land that are not under current occupance revert to community land for the purpose of hunting, fishing, and collection of forest produce, and every member of the village group has equal access to it for that duration. Most Naga villages, thus, have a titular head of the village, "owners" of clan lands, and individual users of clan lands. Customary law permits the alienation of neither village nor clan land. The decision on which stretch of land should be cleared for cultivation and when it should be allowed to revert to the regenerative cycle is made jointly by either the village community or the elected representatives of the village community.

Among the Kuki tribes, the village land belongs to the village chief. The relationship between the chief and the villagers,
among many Kuki tribes, is that of a feudal lord and his tenants. The rent paid to the chief varies between three and five tins of rice for every jhum plot cultivated (Roy Burman 1970:207). The degree of autocracy differs from one tribe to another. Among some groups, such as the Thadou, chief-ship is hereditary (Misao, no date). Among others, such as the Chothe of Purum Khullen in Tengnoupul district, it rotates among different clans (Needham 1958, 1960, 1964). Each chief has a council of advisors who, in some cases, are elected and in other cases, born to their offices. The decision on which stretch of land to bring under cultivation, when to abandon it, and how to divide the cleared land in each crop cycle, is made by the chief in consultation with his advisors, the best lands usually going to the men in power. It is, however, the duty of the chief and his council to ensure that every family has enough land to feed itself (Stevenson 1943).

The development of permanent wet-rice fields introduces elements of change in these traditional systems of land control. The adoption of terracing and water control leads to the growth of concepts about precise plots and control of land. Since individuals, or individual families become involved with the maintenance of the terraces or irrigated fields and the water channels, management and sharing of water for irrigation, and the cultivation of the same plot of land over and over again, the concept of ownership develops. Land

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13The Kuki chiefs were legally divested of their right to ownership of the village land by the enactment of the Manipur Hill Areas (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act, 1967 on January 10, 1967.
becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold. Among the Naga tribes who have a well-developed indigenous system of terraced farming, customary law lays down detailed rules relating to the equitable distribution of water throughout the terraced fields (Hodson 1911).

In many villages, both Kuki and Naga, when jhum fields become adjunct to the permanently cultivated fields, the concept of private ownership of land extends to the jhum fields as well. Agricultural land, which traditionally was community property, becomes private property and hence alienable. Almost every village has a certain proportion of very unproductive land which is not worth laying claim to. In many villages that is the only communal land left from which the indigent try to scrape a living.14

The shrinkage, and often virtual disappearance, of communal land, the alienability of private land, and the pressure of a burgeoning population leads to the emergence of a class of landless who have to resort to working on the land of others to support themselves. This process is clearly discernable in the Khuga valley where tribes have taken to permanent cultivation in a big way (Fig. 4.8). Many dispossed individuals are, thus, forced to migrate as wage laborers to the relatively more prosperous neighboring villages or to villages and even towns, in the valley.

14In Manipur hills, too, as in the central Chin hills of Burma, on such unclaimed areas, "the newly-weds and the newly arrived, the widows and the orphans scrape a poor but independent living from the soil until inheritance brings them better plots or incapacity forces them to enter some other person's household as unpaid helps" (Stevenson 1943:98).
Interestingly, this migration is not just one-way. A reverse stream of seasonal migrant workers from the valley arrives to work in the wet-rice fields of the tribals. This situation arises mainly as a result of the withdrawal of females from the agricultural work force. With the adoption of permanent wet-rice cultivation as the primary source of sustenance, the involvement of women in the agricultural operations goes down remarkably. A comparison of Figs. 4.6 and 4.8 clearly illustrates the inverse relationship between women cultivators and the area under permanent cultivation ($r = -0.4706$, Table 4.1).

Traditionally, paddy culture takes a great deal of time and effort on the part of women. Despite active female participation in jhum cultivation, the adoption of the new mode of cultivation is not able to involve women in the activities such as transplanting of seedlings and weeding because these tasks involve standing for hours in flooded fields which in addition to being a completely alien technique, is also very unpleasant. Although women continue contributing to the harvesting, transporting and threshing of the paddy, these operations do not take up enough time to warrant the recording of cultivation as their primary activity by census enumerators.

**AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE VALLEY**

Settled wet-rice cultivation is the dominant form of agriculture in the Manipur valley. A necessary prerequisite for successful establishment of a settled form of agriculture is a degree of territorial security (Sopher 1964). While the hill tribes were
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percent Cultivators</th>
<th>Percent Female Cultivators</th>
<th>Percent Area Under Jhum</th>
<th>Percent Area Under Permanent Cultivation</th>
<th>Percent Agricultural Labor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivators</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.3596</td>
<td>0.1979</td>
<td>-0.2413</td>
<td>-1.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Cultivators</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.3219</td>
<td>-0.4706</td>
<td>-0.3596</td>
<td>-0.3596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.3219</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-0.4770</td>
<td>-0.1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.2413</td>
<td>0.2413</td>
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*All correlation coefficients are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. 
not able to organize themselves beyond the clan or the village, perhaps because of the compartmented nature of their habitat, the tribes inhabiting the central valley of Manipur fought each other until the Meitei gained control by subduing all others, and the Meitei chief became the king of the domain. The society became organized under a central political authority and the resulting internal security must have encouraged the development of settled wet-rice agriculture. A similar situation already exists in northern Pakistan mountain agriculture (Barth 1956).

In addition to territorial security, the physiographic and climatic conditions, too, were conducive to the development of wet-rice cultivation. The flat terrain, fertile soil, favorable climatic conditions, and adequate water supply in the central valley of Manipur permit the practice of this more productive system. Together with the small, outlying Barak basin, the central valley accounts for roughly 10 percent of the state's total area of 22,356 sq. kms, but supports nearly 70 percent of the state's total population. The density of settlements and the density of population in each settlement in the Manipur valley and the Barak basin are therefore significantly higher than in the hills (Fig. 4.7).

The Manipur valley is built up of alluvium deposited by rivers flowing down from the surrounding hills, which ranges in thickness from 105 to 150 meters (Ansari 1976b). The soils in the

15 According to the 1971 census, the population of Manipur was 1,069,555.
valley are generally clayey loams, rich in potash and phosphate (R. P. Singh 1976). The most fertile portions of the valley are those that are inundated each year and enriched by the deposits of fresh silt left behind by the receding flood waters. Even the land that lies above the level of general inundation receives adequate irrigation from the innumerable streams that flow down from the hills and is thus quite productive. The low lying marshy and swampy land around the Loktak and in parts of the interflures of the valley is built up of organic and peat soils. Paddy rice does well on such soils. The level terrain, fertile soils, adequate water supply, and a favorable climate, make the Manipur valley agriculturally a very productive area. The dominant crop grown in the fields is paddy rice, but a variety of crops including pulses, tropical and subtropical vegetables and fruits, tobacco and sugarcane are grown in the household gardens.

The natural vegetation that must have once existed in the valley was cut down a long time ago. The Manipur court chronicle recounts kings hunting wild elephants in areas that are now occupied by big villages and townships. The clumps of bamboos and fruit trees that dot the valley are all cultivated and do not constitute its natural vegetation. Even though the valley has been intensively cultivated for several centuries, until the beginning of the present century there was enough land available in the valley to permit extension of cultivated area. In 1874, Brown (1874:85) noted that,
"one half of the whole area of the valley is fit for raising crops of various kinds. Of this, only about half is under cultivation." He also noted that, "It has been ascertained from all sides that within the last few years more especially, cultivation has been considerably increased" (Brown 1874a:87). More than thirty years later, Hodson (1908:42) wrote that "not only is there still a fair amount of land available for the extension of cultivation, but very large tracts could be made available by well-planned and not necessarily very expensive drainage operations." By 1931, however, the situation had changed because the Political Agent of Manipur observed that there was no scope for expansion of agriculture in the main valley (cited in Roy Burman 1970:204).

The growing inadequacy of land owing to a rapidly increasing population forced the valley dwellers to move into the foothills surrounding the valley. Most of these movements occurred along lines of easy communication, such as the interstate highway. A majority of nontribal settlements outside the valley are, thus, located in the Sadar Hills subdivision of the north district along the Imphal-Dimapur highway (Fig. 3.2). These non-tribal settlements include both Meitei and Nepali villages.

The Barak valley, which lies west of the western hills, is the hottest and wettest part of the state. Jiribam in the Barak basin, registers a mean annual temperature of 23.6° C (R. P. Singh 1976). The southwest monsoons, which are funneled through the Surma Gap in Assam and blow across the western hills deposit over 2500 mm of rain in the Barak valley. The heavy rain that also occurs in the
western hills erodes the soil especially in the vegetationally denuded jhum lands. The eroded soil is transported by the Barak and Jiri rivers and deposited in the Barak valley. These soils are rich in nitrogen and phosphorous, and in conjunction with the local climatic conditions, support sub-tropical semi-evergreen forests of hardwood trees with a thick undergrowth of bamboos, canes, shrubs and palms. The Barak valley has been an area of major immigration of people from the surrounding hills and plains regions and also, to some extent, from the central valley of Manipur. Because of the resulting pressure of population, most of the forest has been cleared for cultivation of paddy.

Land Tenure in the Manipur Valley

Land in the Manipur valley, traditionally, belonged to the king. The valley land was subdivided into villages, each under a headman who owned some land of his own as a favour from the king on which he paid no tax, but who was responsible for collecting tax in kind from each cultivator in the village. Part of the remaining cultivated land in the valley was in the possession of the nobles, brahmins, and soldiers, who were exempt from paying tax on a fixed amount of land granted to them. Any additional land acquired was, however, taxable (Brown 1874a). The remainder of the land was under the direct control of the king, some of which was cultivated for the king under the system of lallup.

Lallup was a system of compulsory service for the state rendered by every man between seventeen and sixty years of age, for
ten days out of every forty (McCulloch 1859; Brown 1874a; Hodson 1908). The entire population was divided into guilds, and the members of each guild performed the service that their guild was skilled at. All public works such as roads, bridges and aqueducts were built and maintained by lallup labour. Some people provided military service. Specialized craftsmen, such as goldsmiths, crafted articles of luxury for the king and his family. Still others were deputed to the personal service of the king and his nobles (Allen 1905).

Every individual liable for lallup was granted one pari of land, equivalent to three acres,\(^{16}\) for which he had to pay an annual tax ranging between two and thirteen baskets of rice, each basket containing about sixty pounds of the grain (Hodson 1908:86). It is not clear from the literature available whether the land granted under lallup was transferable or inheritable, nor whether there was any other way of acquiring land. When the state came under British administration in 1891, the system of lallup was abolished and a tax payable in cash was assessed on all cultivated land in the valley.\(^{17}\) To do so, the British surveyed and measured the entire

\(^{16}\)Both Brown (1874a) and Hodson (1908) gave three acres as the equivalent of a pari, but Allen (1905) put the figure at two and a half acres.

\(^{17}\)Johnstone (1896:114) regretted the abolition of lallup because he believed that, "The system was a good one, and when not carried to excess, pressed heavily on nobody. It was especially adapted to a poor state sparsely populated. In such a state...where the amount of revenue is small, and the rate of wages is often comparatively high, it is next door to impossible to carry out much
valley and recorded details of land holdings. Allen (1905:119) noted that, in the valley, "land is...bought, sold and mortgaged as though the occupant had a valid legal title." Non-arable land that fell within the territory of a particular village was, however, considered communal land, and was often leased out by the village community to "Muhammedans and other persons of alien descent [Nepalis?]...[who were] charged exorbitant rents for grazing and grass cutting" (Hodson 1908).

At present, agricultural land in the Manipur valley (including the Barak basin) is individually owned. Land is inherited equally by all children. This leads to fragmentation of land holdings. Since almost every inch of arable land in the valley is already under cultivation, there is not much scope for further expansion. Many individuals who cannot afford to buy more land to add to their dimunitive holdings for adequate sustenance, sell theirs to those who can. During the past two decades, these buyers have often been Nepalis. Those dispossessed of their lands either become agricultural laborers (Fig. 4.9) or join the work force involved in secondary or tertiary sector activities, or join the growing ranks of the unemployed. All these options often involve migration of the needed public works by payment. On the other hand, every man in India who lives by cultivation, has much spare time on his hands, and the 'Lalup' system very profitably utilises this, and for the benefit of the community at large."

After the British took over the administration of Manipur, they made no attempt to measure the area under cultivation in the hills but imposed a house tax on each household.
individual to another village or town. As agricultural labourers, the nontribal valley dwellers have, in recent years, found work in the wet rice fields of the tribals in the foothills. Many of the resettled tribes in the Chakpi valley of the Tengnoupal district, for example, depend on labor from the central valley to plough their paddy fields and transplant the seedlings in the flooded beds (Roy Burman 1976). Some tribal families who do not have enough manpower to work their fields, also hire labor from the valley. The headman of Komlathabi village in Tengnoupal district, for example, whose only son was away to school in Imphal, hired a Nepali to cultivate his jhum field.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

The pressure caused by the inability of traditional systems of subsistence agriculture to accommodate a rapidly growing population with a comparable increase in productivity often forces people to look for other avenues of sustenance. The division of labor and the specialization of activities are extended outside the household giving rise to a new occupational structure, leading to a diversification of the economy.

The growth of a network of roads has also created conditions conducive to economic diversification. The expansion of roads and a transport system restructures and refocuses geographic space by providing a basic framework upon which the modern administrative system is built, ideas and innovations spread, and goods and people move (Riddell 1970). Areas in Manipur affected by the extension of
roads and motorized transportation resulting in the inflow of new technology, increased mobility, and greater access to markets, have witnessed some degree of commercialization of agriculture. Individuals, and even entire communities, have become involved in small-scale market trade. This trade is restricted not just to agricultural products but also includes products of the household industry such as spun cotton yarn, woven and embroidered cloth, baskets, mats, and other bamboo and cane artifacts.

Trading activity, in Manipur, is concentrated mainly in the central valley and along the north-south axis formed by the Imphal-Dimapur highway and the Imphal-Churachandpur road (Figs. 4.10 and 4.11). Accessibility is, thus, an important determinant of the location of centers of trade. Whereas most of the interstate trade is controlled by the mayang, and some Meitei men, the trade of local produce in the local markets is managed mainly by Meitei women (Fig. 4.12). Most villages with a predominance of female traders are clustered around Imphal and along the Imphal-Churachanpur road. These women either walk or ride a bus to the nearest village market, carrying their wares in large square baskets on their heads. Structurally, all village markets are made up of rows of earthwork plinths on which each woman sets up her shop. The largest of these women's markets, the Sana Keithal or the "golden bazaar," is located at Imphal. The market, which is held in the afternoon, is attended
Figure 4.10
MANIPUR

WORKERS ENGAGED IN TRADE, 1971

LOCATION QUOTIENT

- < 0.75
- 0.75-1.25
- 1.25-3.0
- > 3.0

Figure 4.11
Figure 4.12

MANIPUR
FEMALE TRADERS
AS PERCENT OF TOTAL TRADERS, 1971
by several thousand women each day. The items sold include rice, vegetables, dried fish, spices, betel leaf and areca nut (to which most Manipuris are addicted), cotton yarn, woven and embroidered cloth, baskets, mats, jewellery, bell metal wares, and small agricultural implements such as sickles and hoes.

Involvement of tribal women in trade occurs only in some of the villages on the bus route and close to the markets in the valley. Most of the village markets in the hills are held once a week, while in the valley they are held every day (Fig. 4.16). The only exceptions are some markets in the North and the Tengnoupal districts. In Tengnoupal, however, these markets are located in settlements with sizable nontribal populations. Intervillage trade is also important in the hills, but is not reflected in the census data because the census enumerators record only the primary occupations. Many tribals make frequent trips to the valley to trade. The Meiteis, for example, depend on the Maring to supply them with baskets and mats (Das 1978). The Maring, in turn, buy bell metal pots, glass tumblers, and baubles from the Meiteis.

The three main centres of trading activity in the hills that are not located along the north-south communication axis, are

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19 In 1905, Allen described this bazaar as consisting of fifty five rows of plinths. "At 3-30 P.M. the place is absolutely deserted ... An hour-and-a-half later the place is white with people. There are from 2,000 to 3,000 women sitting behind their wares, and the throng of purchasers is even larger" (Allen 1905:108). Little has changed, except the crowds are now even larger, and men form part of the clientele. A century ago, Brown (1874:91) had noted, "Men, with the exception of foreigners, are not allowed to enter the market places: all the buying and selling is conducted by women."
situated in the east close to Burmese border. The most important of these is Moreh, which is located on the Indo-Burma highway right at the border. Its locational advantage as a lucrative "trading" centre has attracted many adventurous tribal and nontribal settlers. According to the 1971 Census, Moreh had a population of 3,581 nearly a third of whom were tribal, the rest being mayang and Meitei. Its population in 1974, however, was estimated at 9,000, of whom 2,000 were tribal, 2,000 Meitei, and the rest were mayang (Report on Moreh and Tamu 1974). The large mayang component can be partly explained as being members of the Indian Border Security Force (IBSF) stationed at Moreh. The rest are mainly traders. Despite the presence of a large contingent of the IBSF, most of the trade across the border is illegal. Strict custom laws of the Indian government discouraging the import of consumer goods, and the flexible "unofficial" exchange rate of the Indian and Burmese currencies at the border have made Moreh a flourishing base for smuggling. The local government officials turn a blind eye to the illegal activity because it satisfies their social need of acquiring the much desired imported goods. The most popular items smuggled into Moreh are synthetic fabrics, Japanese watches, calculators and stereo equipment, and American blue jeans. The reverse traffic consists of bicycles, sewing machines, and flash lights.

Most workers engaged in the household industry, too, are concentrated in the central valley. People considered as household workers are those who are full time artisans or craftsmen, and include weavers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, and carpenters. Whereas
most other crafts are the preserve of men, weaving is carried on exclusively by women. Although the hill people are very skilled at certain crafts such as basketry (Maring), carpentry (Chothe), and weaving (Tangkhul and Hmar), and many of these items are made only for sale, the number of full time craftsmen is so small that they are not reflected in the census data. The only exceptions are two traditional weaving villages: Parvachom, a Hmar village in the South district, and Nungshong Chinthak, a Tangkhul village in the East district. In the Barak basin there are two centers of household industry—a nontribal village in the north and a tribal village in the south—both complementing the trading activity that exists there (Fig. 4.13).

Trade in agricultural produce and local crafts is a traditional occupation of the Meiteis and had existed long before the British arrived on the scene. The British found Meitei society to be divided into functional groups such as cultivators, fishermen, artisans, musicians and dancers, and scribes (Brown 1874a; Allen 1905; Hodson 1908). The existence of artisans, or people engaged in the household industry, therefore, does not represent a recent diversification of economic activities. In the hills, too, limited trade in local products has existed for a long time. This trade was not confined only to hill villages, but was also conducted with villages in the valley. Marings, as I have already mentioned, have supplied their baskets not just to neighboring villages in the hills, but to the valley as well. The Meiteis have regularly bought fuel wood, timber for house construction, bamboo shoots, roots and tubers, and
MANIPUR
WORKERS IN HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY
1971

Figure 4.13
other products from the tribals (Nobinchandra 1979). Although there has been an intensification of trading in the hills and between the hills and the valley, the process is not reflected by the census data. The Census records only the primary occupation, but most of the trade and also the production of local crafts and other material goods are carried on by tribals as subsidiary activities.

Occupational categories in the Census that do reflect a distinct shift from traditional occupations are "construction;" manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairing activities clubbed under the headings "other than household industry;" "transport and storage;" and "other services." Among the tribals even those performing traditional services such as that of the village chief or the priest are basically cultivators. Among the Meitei, however, the emergence of a service class is not a new phenomenon. The feudal set up under a king in the valley necessitated the existence of services of scribes, musicians, overseers of the royal stables and the treasury, messengers, "strikers of the gongs," butlers, body guards, and house servants of the nobility (Allen 1905:54-55). Many of the traditional services have died out and have been replaced by a set of new ones which include those performed by school teachers, peons, clerks, pharmacists, doctors and lawyers, functionaries in government departments, and policemen, to name just a few. While some of the workers in the different categories of occupations described above may be self-employed, most of them work for either wages or a salary.
On the basis of the occupational categories of the Census, I have devised an index of economic diversification. An indicator of economic transformation, or diversification, was selected from each of the three sectors of economy: the primary, secondary, and tertiary, and the three were combined into a single index. The category "agricultural workers" reflects the emergence of a situation in the primary sector where the workers are dispossessed of their land—the basic productive resource of the tribals as well as the Meiteis. The two categories, "construction" and "other than household industry" were combined to form the "nonhousehold" activities related to the secondary sector. "Transport and storage" and "other services" were combined to form the indicator of diversification within the tertiary sector.

The raw data for each of the three new categories were converted into percentages to remove the bias of scale, and appropriate weights were given to each indicator. The weighted indicators were added together, and the sum was divided by the largest value of the series to come up with the index of diversification. A weight of 1 was assigned to "agricultural workers" because the existence of these workers does not necessarily denote a radical shift in the traditional mode of production; it only indicates the operation of

20 Although the system of lallup among the Meiteis was a form of forced labor that included agricultural labor, it was different because it bestowed on the workers the status of cultivators by granting them agricultural land for personal cultivation.
processes leading to alienation of some persons from their land, but
the emergence of such processes lead to the diversification of
economic activities.

Boserup (1970) made an important distinction between the
"bazaar and service sector" and the "modern sector" in her discussion
of sequential changes in occupational structure leading to economic
development. According to her, the first step involves the replace­
ment of subsistence production for family use by commercial produc­
tion for sale, and a shift of workers into the bazaar and service
sector. The next step involves a shift to employment in modern
factories, offices, modern shops and modern service industries.
Since it is not possible to isolate the elements of the "modern" and
the "bazaar" sectors in the census data, the indicators of diversifi­
cation of the secondary and the tertiary sectors were both given a
weight of 2.

Fig. 4.14 reveals four clusters of economic diversification
in Manipur. One occurs around Imphal in the central valley, another
around Churachandpur in the Khuga valley, a third in the North
district along the Imphal-Dimapur highway, and the fourth around
Jiribam in the Barak valley. Most other centers of economic diversi­
fication in the hills correspond with administrative headquarters
which provide greater employment opportunities, or are located along
unpaved roads where the task of building and paving roads is in
progress. Besides employment in construction activities (mainly road
building), the other source of employment in the secondary sectors
is the manufacturing, processing and repairing units using electric
MANIPUR
INDEX OF ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION
1971

Figure 4.14
power and "modern" tools. These units include saw mills, rice and oil mills, and those involved in repair and manufacture of replacement parts for vehicles, bicycles, watches and clocks (NCAER 1961). Because of their dependence on electric power, such units are restricted to areas where electricity is available, mainly in the central valley.

AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURAL AMENITIES

Theoretically, access to modern amenities should provide impetus for development. The availability of electricity, for example, should stimulate the development of modern power-based industry, the existence of schools should result in an increase in literacy and education, and the presence of modern medical facilities should ensure a healthy population predisposed towards the acceptance of modern ideas and technology.

The census data of Manipur provide information on the presence of the different levels of educational institutions and medical facilities in villages, the availability of postal services and electricity, the location of village markets, and the sources of drinking water supply. The presence of these amenities indicates a certain level of modernization or development. How did these amenities get located where they are? Do all amenities tend to converge at certain points? If they do, does it mean that those points are the nodes of development, or "growth poles" from where modernizing influences diffuse?
A visual comparison of the locations of these facilities did not show any close correspondence in their distribution pattern (Figs. 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, 4.19). I, therefore, decided to build a composite index of the availability of each of the amenities. The different levels of every amenity were given different weights, and each of the amenities was then given a weight according to its importance as an indicator or generator of development. Education and health were equally weighted and assigned the highest weight. Village market was considered next in importance because, in addition to being a center of business and trade, it is also an important center of exchange and dissemination of ideas. Despite its potential to attract modern industry, electricity, which is also an important indicator of development, was given a lower weight because of its erratic availability. Many of the electrified villages, especially in the hills, receive electricity for only a few hours every day and power supply, even at Imphal, is undependable. Postal services, which permit an expansion of the area of contact and interaction, were given a lower weight than electricity but more than was given to the source of drinking water, which was considered the least important indicator of development.\footnote{The weights allotted to each of the facilities are as follows: education = .25, medical facilities = .25, village market = .20, power supply = .15, postal service = .10, source of drinking water = .05.} The statistical correlation between each of these amenities is fairly weak, the strongest ($r = 0.49629$) relationship existing between medical facilities and postal service (Table 4.2).
Figure 4.15
Figure 4.16
MANIPUR
POSTAL FACILITIES, 1971

Figure 4.17
MANIPUR
SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER, 1971

Figure 4.19
TABLE 4.2

CORRELATION BETWEEN INFRASTRUCTURAL AMENITIES
IN MANIPUR (1971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Power Supply</th>
<th>Educational Facilities</th>
<th>Medical Facilities</th>
<th>Postal Service</th>
<th>Village Market</th>
<th>Water Supply</th>
<th>Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Supply</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>0.1290*</td>
<td>0.2569*</td>
<td>0.1853*</td>
<td>0.2489*</td>
<td>0.1499*</td>
<td>0.2708*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>1.0000*</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1036*</td>
<td>0.1720*</td>
<td>0.1367*</td>
<td>0.0822*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4988*</td>
<td>0.1450*</td>
<td>0.1795*</td>
<td>0.0874*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Market</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1628*</td>
<td>0.1194*</td>
<td>0.0541</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Supply</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.0011</td>
<td>0.2193*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation coefficients significant at $\alpha = .05$. 

As expected, fig. 4.20 shows the concentration of most amenities in the central valley, but several villages within the valley are as bereft of these modern amenities as those in the hills. A correlation between the composite index of amenities and the index of accessibility, which takes into account the kind of road (national highway, metalled road, unmetalled road, or bridle path) and distance from the nearest town, did not show a very strong correlation either (r = 0.36790). Although all centers with an average availability of facilities are connected by roads, the role of towns as centers of diffusion does not seem to be very strong (Berry 1969). This can be explained by the fact that seven out of the eight towns in Manipur were classified as towns for the first time in 1971 (Census of India 1971, 1977a). The greatest number of amenities exist together in a Nepali village located on the Imphal-Dimapur highway, in Tamenglong, and in Mao.

Although most of the village markets evolved through the ages, and a number of schools were started by the Christian missionaries in the pre-independence period, most of the other amenities

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22 An important element of most indices of accessibility is the distance from the nearest road (Schuth 1980). Because of the unavailability of large scale topographic maps of the area, and in view of the nature of the terrain, I considered it prudent not to measure straight line distances between villages and the nearest road, and it is thus not included in the index of accessibility used here. Sliding weights were assigned to the two components of the index; where distance from the nearest town was less than 5 kilometers, greater weightage was given to the distance factor, as the distance from town increased, greater weightage was given to the presence of a road. A national highway was given more weight than a metalled road, which in turn was given greater weightage than an unmetalled road.
Figure 4.20
were set up by the state government to provide an impetus for development. The distribution of amenities, however, appears quite haphazard, and many of the administrative headquarters which might be considered nodal centers are quite poorly served.

STATUS OF LITERACY

Literacy has been defined by the Indian Census as the "ability to read any simple letter either in print or in manuscript and to write a simple letter" (Census of India 1961:92). Literacy makes possible communication without actual contact. It is capable of disseminating a new awareness of the "outside world," of new opportunities and possibilities. In their attempts to accelerate the process of development, governments in the Third World countries have, therefore, been trying to raise the level of literacy by increasing the availability of educational facilities.

Although literacy alone does not determine the level of development, it is undoubtedly an important vehicle of development. Literacy is also an indicator of development. Studies such as Golden's (1955) and Gosal's (1964) have shown a strong correlation between industrialization and literacy, and urbanization and literacy. Some of the least industrialized and urbanized areas of India show higher levels of literacy than the more industrialized and urbanized parts of the country. Mizoram, which adjoins Manipur, is an outstanding example, where despite a very low level of urbanization (only 8 percent of its population is classified as urban), the literacy rate is nearly 45 percent, which is well above the national average of 29.5 percent (Census of India 1971, 1981).
Religion and Literacy

This anomaly can be explained as being the result of the effort of Christian missionaries in the region who considered literacy to be an effective means of religious instruction. To spread their religion, it was important that the people should be able to read the Gospel in their own language. To teach the new converts to read was, therefore, one of the primary aims of the Christian missionaries. They translated the Bible into several tribal languages, all of which were spoken languages without a script. They used the Roman script to reduce the various tribal languages to written forms (Pudaite 1963:68; Terhuja 1972:295). The spread of Christianity and the spread of literacy are, thus, believed to be closely related.

Contrary to the popular belief that the British administration encouraged missionary activity in the hill areas as a means of "civilizing" the tribal peoples, Christian missionaries, in fact, often met with great opposition from the officials in Assam. There were basically two reasons for this opposition: first, the authorities did not want British and other foreign nationals to unnecessarily venture into areas which were known to be unsafe; and secondly, they felt that although it was their function to maintain law and order in the areas under their control, it was not their responsibility to improve the condition of life of the people (Pudaite 1963:63). This attitude of the British authorities is evident in the following note by Johnstone (1896:43-44):

I strongly urged the advisability of establishing a regular system of education, including religious instruction, under a
competent clergyman of the Church of England. I pointed out that the Nagas had no religion; that they were highly intelligent and capable of receiving civilization; that with it they would want a religion, and that we might just as well give them our own, and make them in that way a source of strength, by thus mutually attaching them to us. Failing this, I predicted that following the example of other hill-tribes, they would sooner or later become debased Hindoos or Mussulmans, and ... be a constant source of trouble and annoyance... My suggestion did not find favour with the authorities, and I deeply regret it.

Missionary activity in Manipur began long after it did in the neighboring Naga and Mizo hills, and also in the hills of Burma. The first missionary to be granted permission to work in the Manipur hills was Pettigrew of the American Baptist Mission who, in 1894, was allowed by the British authorities to work among the Tangkhul Nagas in the northeastern hills of Manipur "at his own risk" (Sword 1935).

In the early years, missionaries in the region were not very successful at getting the tribal people to accept Christianity, but after several decades of indefatigable endeavor and missionary zeal, they finally succeeded. A major factor responsible for the change in attitude of the tribals was the work done by the medical missionaries (Terhuja 1972). These men seemed to succeed when the local witch doctors failed, and that did a lot to instil confidence in the people.

The correlation between Christianity and literacy does not appear to hold for all Manipur. Undoubtedly the 32.9 percent literacy rate for Manipur is a little higher than the national average of 29.5 percent partly because of the Christian component of the population. It would, in all probability, have been much lower had the missionaries not introduced Christianity, and basic reading
skills along with it, among the hill tribes. The difference between the levels of literacy of the people living in the hills and in the valley, however, is considerable and is, in fact, in favor of the latter (Table 4.3). While only 28 percent of the predominantly Christian hill people are literate, 35 percent of the predominantly non-Christian inhabitants of the valley can read and write.

One of the reasons for the higher level of literacy in the valley is its higher level of urbanization. Of the eight urban centers in Manipur, seven are located in the valley. If only the rural component of the two regions is compared, the difference between the two literacy rates declines because the rate for the hill districts goes up to nearly 28 percent, and for the valley it goes down to 31 percent. A comparison of the literacy levels of the urban population of the hills and the valley, however, favors the hills (Table 4.4). Churachandpur, the only settlement in the hills granted an urban status, is the headquarter of most of the missions operating in the hills south of the valley and it boasts of a college and several high schools. The population of this hill town is predominantly Christian.

Within the hills there is considerable variation in the level of literacy which corresponds with the proportion of Christians in the population (Table 4.3). The East and South districts of Manipur have very high proportions of Christian populations, and also high proportions of literates. These are also the two parts of the state where missionary activity first began, and from where it spread to other parts of the hills. Ukhrul, a Tangkhul village in the north-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Christian Population Percent</th>
<th>Literate Population Percent</th>
<th>Literate Female Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengnoupal</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4.4
LITERACY AND URBANIZATION IN MANIPUR (1971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hills</th>
<th>Valley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literate</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>31.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literate</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literate</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literate</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
east hills, was selected in 1894 by Pettigrew of the American Baptist Mission to start his operations in the Manipur hills, and with increasing success, the mission spread its activity to the areas that now form a part of the North district (Sword 1935:116-117). In 1910, Roberts of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission visited Senvon, a Hmar village in the southwestern Manipur hills (now the South district), converted five men to Christianity within a week, and established a school in the village (Pudaite 1960:6-7).

The Tangkhuls and the Hmars, being the first to receive Christianity, are among the most literate tribes in the state. The Census reports provide neither tribe nor village data on religion. It is, therefore, not possible to determine whether any relationship exists between the level of literacy of individual tribes and their adoption of Christianity. Since most tribal groups occupy fairly distinct areas in the hills, it is possible to conclude from the district figures in Table 4.3 that such a correlation would be significant. Fig. 4.21 and 4.22 show the higher literacy level in the East and the South district. In the Tengnoupal district southeast of the valley, an axis of relatively high literacy runs roughly along the Indo-Burma highway and corresponds with the area of Christian villages.23 It can be tentatively concluded that the villages with high literacy levels in the North and West districts must also be Christian villages.

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23This information was collected in Manipur in 1979.
Figure 4.21
MANIPUR

FEMALE LITERACY, 1971

LOCATION QUOTIENT

- < 0.75
- 0.75-1.25
- 1.25-3.00
- > 3.0

Figure 4.22
The target populations of the Christian missionaries in India were mainly the tribals who lacked a formal religion, and the low caste Hindus who because of their under-privileged status in society were more easily drawn to the egalitarian principles of Christianity. The missionaries working in the region were, thus, never really interested in the majority of the Meitei population. The only missionary to have been allowed by the British to work in the valley --where he even started a school for boys--was asked to leave after six months in deference to the Maharaja's wishes (Sword 1935). Despite the Maharaja's apparent reluctance, the British political officers are believed to have pressed for, and encouraged, the establishment of schools in the Manipur valley. The first school was opened at Imphal in 1872, and by 1904 there were thirty schools, one of which was a Middle school where instruction was given in English (Allen 1905). The Meiteis of the central valley, therefore, had access to modern education despite the absence of Christian missionary activity and the apathy of the Manipuris in power toward the establishment of schools.

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24 In 1905, Allen (1905:128) wrote, "Education ... received little encouragement in the days of native rule. In 1869 ... there were no schools or any wish for them on the part of the [Manipuri] authorities. Offers of assistance in the formation of a school were denied by the Manipuris, who stated that they preferred to remain ignorant. Some of the highest officials did not know how to read or write, and, like the knights of the middle ages, despised such arts as beneath their serious consideration."
Female Literacy

An important indicator of development is female literacy. The low level of literacy so widespread in India is believed to be due to the traditional subsistence agricultural economy, the largely self-contained rural life, and the oral-worship religion, where literacy is perceived to have no value for either men or women (Krishan and Shyam 1973).\(^{25}\) Female literacy, in particular, is very low largely because of the perceived role and status of women in the society. The ideal role of a woman in most societies is that of a housewife, and this definition forms the basis of the prejudice against female education (Gosal 1964, Sopher 1980b). An increase in female literacy would thus indicate a breakdown of this prejudice, and might often be accompanied by an increase in employment of women outside the home.

In Manipur, the literacy rate for women according to the 1971 Census was 19.5 percent, which was a little higher than national average of 18.7 percent. The role of women in Manipur is more than exclusively domestic since the tribal women take active part in agricultural activities and the Meitei women control the local trade of produce and handicrafts. Neither the tribal nor the Meitei women are tied down by the restrictions of purdah which is so widespread among the Hindus and Muslims all across northern India. The prejudice against female education exists, nonetheless, because of the

\(^{25}\) In the Hindu tradition, the common man does not need to know how to read. The reading of scriptures is the business of the literate Brahmin caste, who take care of formally communicating with God for the laity.
lack of perception of the advantages of education to women in their present role.

Christian teaching does not differentiate between the sexes in respect to the attainment of literacy, and the spread of Christianity in India has been found to have encouraged the growth of female literacy (Sopher 1980b). The correlation between religion and female literacy was found to hold true for the East and South districts of Manipur, both of which have a high percentage of Christians as well as higher rates of female literacy (22.1 and 24.3 percent respectively) than the other districts (Table 4.3, Fig. 4.22). The relatively high rate of female literacy (22.3 percent) in the Central district is inflated by the urban component of the population. The female literacy rate of the rural population of the district is only 16 percent. Female literacy is, however, fairly high in the urban areas in both the valley and the hills (Table 4.4).

Although the size of a village has some bearing on its literacy rate, it does not affect the female literacy rate (Table 4.5). The accessibility of a village in terms of its nearness to an urban center and the type of road connection has a positive but low correlation with both the literacy rate and the female literacy rate. A more accessible village would be more open to interaction with outsiders, such as government extension workers, and the possibility of government financed schools being set up in such villages would be greater. The correlation between accessibility and the number of schools was very low. This is perhaps due to the fact that the mission schools are located in even the more remote and relatively
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Distance from Nearest Town</th>
<th>Percentage Literacy</th>
<th>Percentage Female Literacy</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Percentage Workers in Non-agricultural</th>
<th>Percentage Workers in Other Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1129*</td>
<td>-0.0504</td>
<td>0.0850*</td>
<td>0.1133*</td>
<td>-0.0495</td>
<td>-0.0705*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.2042*</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.1155*</td>
<td>0.0329</td>
<td>0.3049*</td>
<td>0.3535*</td>
<td>0.1285*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.2196*</td>
<td>0.8604*</td>
<td>0.1635*</td>
<td>-0.0590</td>
<td>0.3273*</td>
<td>0.0723*</td>
<td>0.5289*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literacy</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.1184*</td>
<td>0.0964*</td>
<td>0.1982*</td>
<td>0.3195*</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0836*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literacy</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Workers in Non-agricultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Workers in Other Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation coefficients significant at $\alpha = .05$. 
inaccessible parts of the state, because the missionaries did not restrict their activities to only the more accessible villages. One would normally expect higher literacy in villages with a greater number of schools. This assumption, however, does not hold true in Manipur. Elwin (1963:89) noted that there are villages in Manipur with several schools, each school run by a different missionary group. It does not really matter, especially in the smaller villages, whether there is one school or more because the students who would have gone to one school had there been only one, get divided among the different schools. Also, the mere enumeration of a school does not necessarily mean that it functions. Many of the primary schools in the tribal areas are run by a single teacher "whose presence in the school is more an exception than a duty" (Ratha 1981:342). The effective running of a school, thus, depends largely on the dedication and sincerity of the school teacher. Most parents, being themselves illiterate and not understanding the importance of education, do not object to any irregularities.

Literacy rates in Manipur correlate positively with the percentage of nonagricultural workers which denotes some degree of interaction with the outside world. Of all the different categories of nonagricultural employment, literacy rates correlated fairly strongly with "other services" which include occupations such as school teachers, clerks, typists, and require a minimum level of educational attainment.
SUMMARY

An increasing awareness of the depletion of scarce resources resulting from a rapid growth of population, and the inability of the traditional modes of subsistence to cope with the pressure, has led to a restructuring of the production system. This process has been further boosted by the increasing flow of new ideas and technologies as a result of the expansion of the communication network. To adapt to the changing situation, more intensive forms of agricultural production are being adopted in the hills and the plains of Manipur, and the economy of the villages well connected by roads is getting diversified. The changes in technology and economy have induced complementary adjustments in the systems of land tenure.

In the years since India became independent, the state government has promoted the extension of medical and educational facilities, water and power supply, postal services, and a transport network, in an effort to develop and integrate all parts of Manipur. The distribution of infrastructural amenities, however, does not present any distinct pattern. In the central valley they are clustered mainly around Imphal and in the Khuga valley around Churachandpur, but there are many villages in the valley that are lacking in these amenities as much as many of the hill villages. Imphal, Churachandpur, and a cluster of tribal and Nepali villages along the Imphal-Dimapur highway appear to form the nodes of development because it is in these areas that the degree of agricultural and economic diversification is the greatest. In the Barak basin a similar cluster exists near the subdivisional headquarter.
Literacy spread in the hills of Manipur as a result of the efforts of the Christian missionaries, while in the valley the British administrators were responsible for the introduction of education. Historically the differential in the level of literacy among the two physiographic regions has never been great, hence, the literacy rates do not differ significantly among the tribals and the nontribals of Manipur. Among the tribal groups, for historical reasons, the Tangkhuls and the Hmar appear to be more literate than most others.
CHAPTER 5

ETHNICITY AND COMPARATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The previous chapter dealt with the regional dimension of development differentials in Manipur. The two physiographic regions, the hills and the valley, largely correspond with the two major ethnic territories, the tribal and the Meitei. Regional differences, therefore, reflect ethnic differences. The observed patterns of socio-economic transformation were explained in terms of the change-inducing processes in operation among the two ethnic groups. The present chapter seeks to confirm statistically that differences do indeed exist between the different ethnic groups, differences not just between the tribals and the nontribals, but between the tribals, the Meiteis, and the Nepalis. It also seeks to ascertain whether any significant differences exist between the two broad tribal categories, the Naga and the Kuki. Two statistical methods were used in the analysis: multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and discriminant analysis. A set of variables selected on the basis of their ability to reflect socio-economic transformation at the village level were used in the analysis.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (MANOVA)

MANOVA is a multivariate statistical procedure which tests for significant differences between group means of any number of
dependent variables for a set of independent variables, or for different levels of a single independent variable. MANOVA is different from its univariate counterpart, analysis of variance (ANOVA), in that it permits simultaneous testing of an array of variables while accounting for possible correlations among them. It tests for significant differences between means (centroids) by computing the F-statistic, which is a ratio of between-group variance (dispersion) and within-group variance (dispersion). The larger the between-group variation as compared to the within-group variation, the larger the F-statistic which indicates that the groups are significantly different from each other. A statistically significant F-ratio indicates that at least one pair of group means (centroids) is unequal.

This multivariate technique, when applied to the three groups, tribal, Meitei and Nepali, reveals that there are only four variables which do not differ significantly from one group to another (Table 5.1). These include the source of drinking water supply (rivers being the major source, Fig. 4.19), employment of workers in the tertiary sector services other than trade and commerce, the percentage of net sown area, and female literacy. The observation made in the previous chapter about minimal differences in the levels of literacy of the hill and the valley populations, tends to be supported by the fact that literacy-related variables other than female literacy, such as literacy, and educational facilities, are different only at the .05 level of significance. All the other
TABLE 5.1

MANOVA: TRIBAL-MEITEI-NEPALI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>57.94</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
<td>73.97</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Primary Sector</td>
<td>30.47</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Agricultural Laborers</td>
<td>49.69</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Cultivators</td>
<td>264.47</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sector</td>
<td>30.98</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Secondary Sector</td>
<td>55.28</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry</td>
<td>27.31</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Traders</td>
<td>27.56</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Other Services</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.8982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literates</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.0265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.6902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td>66.41</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td>31.32</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
<td>38.49</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated Land per Person</td>
<td>11.66</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>0.0008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.8077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
<td>72.75</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Market</td>
<td>35.59</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.8646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Supply</td>
<td>28.10</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>0.0018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.0141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>39.59</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>12.39</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aDegrees of Freedom = 2, 351

Wilk's criterion F approximation: F(54, 650) = 13.74, PROB > F = 0.0001.
variables indicate significant differences between at least two of the three ethnic groups.

The F-approximation based on Wilk's criterion indicated a highly significant effect on the basis of ethnicity of the groups (F approx. = 13.74, d.f. = 54, 650, PROB. > F = 0.0001). This means that at least two of the three groups are significantly different. To determine which particular ethnic groups were different from each other, pair-wise MANOVA's were conducted and significant differences were found between each pair: Meitei-tribal (Wilk's criterion F approximation = 33.82, d.f. = 27, 325, PROB. > F = 0.0001); tribal-Nepali (Wilk’s criterion F approximation = 14.93, d.f. = 27, 223, PROB. > F = 0.0001); and Meitei-Nepali (Wilk's criterion F approximation = 2.31, d.f. = 27, 76, PROB. > F = 0.0023).

Since MANOVA does not specifically tell us which two of the three groups are significantly different with respect to each variable, a pair-wise multiple comparison procedure, Tukey's studentized range test, was used. This procedure compares the mean of each dependent variable for each group with the mean of the corresponding variable for each of the other groups. The results of the pair-wise comparisons indicate that most of the differences occur between Meiteis and tribals (Table 5.2). Between the Nepalis and each of the other groups, only the means of the variables related with the availability of infrastructural amenities are significantly different, while the variables pertaining to the occupational structure and landuse do not show any such differences. This may indicate that the land use practices and the occupational structure of the Nepalis...
TABLE 5.2
PAIRWISE COMPARISON OF MEANS
Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) Test

| VARIABLE                                                        | TRIBAL- MEITEI | TRIBAL- NEPALI | MEITEI- NEPALI |
|                                                               |                |                |                |
| Total Population                                               | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers                                                | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers in Primary Sector                              | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Agricultural Laborers                                  | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Female Cultivators                                     | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sector                          | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers in Secondary Sector                            | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry                      | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Female Traders                                         | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Workers in Other Services                              | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Literates                                              | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Female Literates                                       | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Area under Permanent Cultivation                        | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Area under Jhum                                        | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Percent Area under Forest                                      | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Cultivated Land per Person                                     | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker                       | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Net Sown Area                                                  | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Distance from Nearest Town                                     | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Village Market                                                 | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Source of Drinking Water                                       | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Power Supply                                                   | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Medical Facilities                                             | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Educational Facilities                                         | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Road                                                           | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Accessibility                                                  | ***            | ***            | ***            |
| Postal Service                                                 | ***            | ***            | ***            |

Note: "***" indicates that the means of the two groups for the given variable are significantly different at $\alpha = 0.05$ level.
are so diverse that the means of the related variables lie at points between those of the means of the variables of the other two groups to make them significantly different from neither. The only occupational characteristic which the Nepalis and the Meiteis differ significantly is the percentage of female cultivators. As this same variable does not differentiate the Nepalis from the tribals, and since the high level of tribal female participation in agriculture has already been observed (Fig. 4.5), it follows that the involvement of women in agriculture among the Nepalis is significantly more than among the Meiteis.

Between the Nagas and the Kukis the multivariate analysis of variance suggests a much greater homogeneity on the basis of individual variables with only five variables revealing significant differences (Table 5.3). These variables relate to population size of the villages, area under jhum, area under forest, distance of villages from the nearest town, and availability of educational facilities. Tukey's test was not required in this case because the analysis involved only one pair of groups. Overall, however, the analysis indicates significant differences between the two groups (Wilk's criterion F approximation = 4.40, d.f. = 26, 156, PROB. > F = 0.0001).

MANOVA tests whether already identified groups are significantly different. But how do the dependent variables within each group combine to give the group its distinct identity? To pick out the variables which best differentiate between groups, a strongly
TABLE 5.3

MANOVA: NAGA-KUKI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>31.71</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.5386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Primary Sector</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.5134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Agricultural Laborers</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.1586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Cultivators</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.2551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sector</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.1733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Secondary Sector</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.5130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.3914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Traders</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.5293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Other Services</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Literates</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.2601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.9357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.0609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>0.0050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
<td>15.95</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated Land per Person</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.9800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.2901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.1521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Market</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.3266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.1675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.3243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>21.07</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.7330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.4118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.5701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aDegrees of Freedom = 1, 181

Wilk's Criterion F approximation: F(26, 156) = 4.40, PROB > F = 0.0001.
recommended follow up procedure is the discriminant analysis (Harris 1975; Borgen and Selig 1978).

**DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS**

That the different ascriptive groups, the Meiteis, Nepalis, and tribals share certain social, cultural, and economic characteristics has been discussed in Chapter 3. That they are also trying to strengthen and maintain their distinct identities in the changing political and economic situation has also been discussed. But how different are these three groups in terms of the socio-economic characteristics that can be derived from the census data on which this study is based? How do the different variables selected for this study combine to distinguish one group from the other?

Discriminant analysis is a statistical technique which combines the variables in such a way that the between group variance is maximized. These linear combinations of discriminating variables are called "discriminant functions" and the relative importance of the function is measured by its "eigenvalue."

Twenty-nine variables were extracted from the census data for the analysis. Rao's V, a stepwise method, was used to select the variables from this array and combine them to achieve the greatest discrimination between the different groups. This stepwise procedure begins by selecting the variable which discriminates best between the groups. Of the remaining variables, the one which would enhance the discriminatory power the most in combination with the first variable is added next. Each subsequent variable is selected on the basis of
its ability to enhance the discriminatory power of the existing combination. The stepwise process of selection stops when none of the remaining variables can add to the discriminatory power of the existing combination. If at any stage the addition of a variable causes another variable already in the combination to lose its power, the weakened variable is removed, although it may be added again at a later stage. The Rao's V method, thus, achieves the greatest generalized distances between two groups.

Several precautions were taken to guard against a bias that might result from the unequal distribution of the three ethnic groups, with an overwhelming dominance of tribal villages and a very small sample of Nepali villages. First, a Bayesian adjustment was made, by assigning prior probabilities proportional to the size of each group. Second, Rao's V method as the stepwise criterion was selected because of its ability to minimize the bias, compared with the other stepwise criteria. Third, in addition to a three-way analysis of the ethnic groups, three two-way analyses were also conducted.

The statistical procedure achieves the objective of discriminating between groups by mathematically forming one or more combinations of variables called "discriminant functions" such that the scores of cases (in this case, villages) belonging to a particular group are fairly similar to each other, but are substantially

1Although the sample contains only sixteen observations, it was used in the analysis because it includes nearly 70 percent of the dominantly Nepali villages.
different from scores of cases belonging to the other group or
groups. In the discriminant analysis, therefore, a "score" is com­
puted for each village and the village is then assigned to the group
it resembles most closely on the basis of its score. If the
ethnicity of villages is already known, the villages misclassified on
the basis of their discriminant scores can be identified. If the
ethnicity of a village is not known, this procedure can be used to
assign it to the group that it resembles the most. Discriminant
analysis has been used here for both these purposes.

Since the ethnicity of all the villages in the sample is
already known, the misclassified village are identified, and reasons
for their aberrance are sought on the basis of the combination of the
discriminatory variables. Discriminant analysis has also been used
to assign the tribal groups with uncertain or fluctuating affilia­
tions (see Table 3.1) to one of the two broad categories--the Naga or
the Kuki.

Classification of Ethnic Groups

The essential features of the three-way discriminant analysis
are summarized in Tables 5.4, and of each of the pair-wise analyses
in Tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7. The variables which contribute to the
standardized discriminant functions are listed in the order of their
relative contribution to power of discrimination. The group
centroids, or the means of the discriminant scores for each group on
the discriminant function show the distance between the groups in
terms of the discriminatory variables. The centroids for all three
TABLE 5.4
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: TRIBAL-MEITEI-NEPALI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Centroids:</th>
<th>Function 1</th>
<th>Function 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>-2.426</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>0.519</td>
<td>-2.657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference between Group Centroids:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tribal-Meitei</th>
<th>Tribal-Nepali</th>
<th>Meitei-Nepali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.179</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>2.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>2.727</td>
<td>2.675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Figure 5.1 for a plot of the Group Centroids)

Eigenvalue: 1.820 0.155

Degree of Separation (Rao's V): 1479

Chi-square ($\chi^2$): 871.69 106.16

Level of Significance: 0.0001 0.0001

Variables which contribute to Standardized Discrimination Function Coefficients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
<td>Percent Total Area under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Other Services</td>
<td>Permanent Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>Percent Literates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivators</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>Amenities Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry</td>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Cultivators</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Secondary Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>Percent Female Traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivated Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5.5

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: TRIBAL-MEITEI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Centroids:</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>0.764</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>-2.413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference between Group Centroids: 3.177

Eigenvalue: 1.848

Degree of Separation (Rao's V): 1356

Chi-square ($\chi^2$): 757.20

Level of Significance: 0.0001

Variables which contribute to Standardized Discrimination Function

Coefficients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
<td>Percent Total Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Other Services</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
<td>Percent Literates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivators</td>
<td>Amenities Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry</td>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Secondary Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Cultivators</td>
<td>Percent Female Traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivated Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated Land Per Person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5.6

**DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: MEITEI-NEPALI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Centroids:</th>
<th>Meitei 0.893</th>
<th>Nepali -9.883</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference between Group Centroids:</td>
<td>10.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue:</td>
<td>8.922</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Separation (Rao's V):</td>
<td>1704</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square ($\chi^2$):</td>
<td>423.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Significance:</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variables which contribute to Standardized Discrimination Function Coefficients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Total Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town Educational Facilities</td>
<td>Cultivated Land per Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Other Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Agricultural Laborers</td>
<td>Cultivable Waste per Agricultural Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5.7

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: TRIBAL-NEPALI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Centroids:</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>-0.0798</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>2.7894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference between Group Centroids:</td>
<td>2.8692</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue:</td>
<td>0.2235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Separation (Rao's V):</td>
<td>128.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square ($\chi^2$):</td>
<td>114.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Significance:</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variables which contribute to Standardized Discrimination Function Coefficients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>Percent Total Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
<td>Percent Total Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivated Area under Permanent Cultivation</td>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Market</td>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Supply</td>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
<td>Percent Agricultural Laborers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
groups based on the three-way discriminant analysis are plotted in Fig. 5.1. The centroids on the basis of the pair-wise analyses are shown in Fig. 5.2.

Table 5.8 gives the classification results of the three-way and the paired discriminant analyses of the ethnic groups. The overall classification accuracy, which is fairly high when the three groups are treated together, improves even further when one pair is treated at a time. When paired with the tribals, 85 percent of the Meitei villages are correctly classified and 100 percent of their villages are correctly classified when they are paired with the Nepalis. The tribals, too, show a high degree of divergence when paired with each of the other two groups: 98 percent of their villages being correctly classified when paired with the Meitei, and 99 percent when paired with the Nepalis. Although the Nepalis are quite distinct from the Meiteis, the discriminatory variables are not able to distinguish them too well from the tribals. As a result, 56 percent or nine of the sixteen Nepali villages are classified as belonging to the tribal category.

The misclassified villages identified on the basis of the three-way discriminant analysis are presented in Fig. 5.3. Almost all the Meitei villages misclassified as tribal have small populations, are poor in infrastructural amenities and are marked by the absence of female traders. The tribal villages misclassified as Meitei lie close to urban centers and have more diversified economies, or if they are far from urban centers, their economies are nonetheless more diversified. Moreh, for example, is a trading
Figure 5.1 Three-way Discriminant Analysis: Tribal-Meitei-Nepali Group Centroids
Figure 5.2 Paired Ethnic Group Centroids
TABLE 5.8
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: ACCURACY OF ETHNICITY CLASSIFICATION

A. TRIBAL-MEITEI-NEPALI

Cases Correctly Classified: 92.42%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Meitei</th>
<th>Nepali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(96.2%)</td>
<td>(2.3%)</td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15.3%)</td>
<td>(84.7%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.3%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
<td>(43.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predicted Group Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Meitei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(97.9%)</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(15.3%)</td>
<td>(84.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. TRIBAL-MEITEI

Cases Correctly Classified: 94.70%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Meitei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(98.9%)</td>
<td>(1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.3%)</td>
<td>(43.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predicted Group Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Tribal</th>
<th>Nepali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(98.9%)</td>
<td>(1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.3%)</td>
<td>(43.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5.8 (Continued)

D. MEITEI-NEPALI

Cases Correctly Classified: 98.96%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meitei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitei</td>
<td>177 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.3
center on the Burma border; Parvachom, in the southwest corner of the state is a Hmar weaving village; Liwachangning just southeast of the valley is an important market center. Phoilen, in the southeast corner, is a freak village with a population of one male cultivator!

The one common element about all tribal villages classified as Nepalis is that they all have a piped supply of drinking water. Permanent cultivation seems to be the dominant form of agriculture in all the villages and most of them have fairly large populations. All the misclassified Nepali villages, on the other hand, lack piped water supply.

When only the Meitei and the tribal are compared, only two of the villages misclassified as Meitei disappear: Moreh, and the one-man "village" of Phoilen (Fig. 5.4). There is a much greater reduction in the misclassification of Meitei villages, and a whole cluster of villages in the eastern part of the valley gets assigned to the correct category.

A pair-wise discriminant analysis conducted on the Meiteis and Nepalis assigns two Nepali villages to the Meitei category, but no Meitei village is misclassified (Fig. 5.5). One of the misclassified Nepali villages lies in the valley and the other in the North district along the Imphal-Dimapur highway. These two villages are the southern- and northern-most Nepali settlements in the sample. Both have diversified economies, large populations, high levels of literacy, are well served by infrastructural amenities, but both lack tap water, which appears to be an important criterion for the classification of a village as a Nepali village.
Figure 5.4
MANIPUR
MEITEI-NEPALI
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

0  25  50 KM

• NEPALI CLASSIFIED AS MEITEI

Figure 5.5
A pairwise discriminant analysis of tribals and Nepalis, however, reverts these aberrant cases back to their misclassification as tribal villages (Fig. 5.6). There is no change in the other misclassified Nepali villages. There is however, a marked change in the case of tribal villages. While five of the eight tribal villages misclassified as Nepali in the three-way discriminant analysis get assigned to their correct category, three different ones get assigned to the Nepali category. These include Moreh, Ukhrul—a large Tangkhul village which is also the administrative headquarter of the East district, and the Mao village Makhel Kaibi. Interestingly, none of these three new additions has a piped supply of drinking water, although both Ukhrul and Moreh are very large settlements with diversified economies and well served by other infrastructural amenities.

Allocation of Unclassified Tribal Villages

Because MANOVA revealed significant overall differences between the Nagas and the Kukis, it was decided to run a discriminant analysis on the two groups. Table 5.9 reveals that as a result of the analysis 74 percent of all villages were correctly identified. Individually, the Kukis did better than the Nagas with 80 percent correct classifications. Among the Nagas, only 66 percent of the villages were correctly classified. The variables which combined to form the discriminant function are listed in Table 5.10 in the order of importance of their contribution to the power of the function. The group centroids are shown in Fig. 5.2. The relatively low value
Figure 5.6
TABLE 5.9
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: ACCURACY OF NAGA/KUKI CLASSIFICATION

Cases Correctly Classified: 73.83%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Group</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th>Naga</th>
<th>Kuki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naga</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(65.8%)</td>
<td>(34.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuki</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(19.9%)</td>
<td>(80.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10.9%)</td>
<td>(89.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of Rao's V in Table 5.10 points to a low degree of separation between the two groups. In other words, the two groups are fairly homogeneous in terms of the variables used in the analysis. This low degree of separation is illustrated by the noise in Fig. 5.7.

The other tribes of Manipur whose identity as Nagas or Kukis is in doubt (Table 3.1) were included in the allocation phase of the discriminant analysis. On the basis of the scores assigned to each village, they were allocated to the appropriate category. It is interesting to note that although most of these tribes have recently been proclaiming affiliation with the Nagas, based on the discriminant function 57 of the 64 unclassified villages were classified as Kuki (Table 5.9). Only seven villages were allocated to the Naga
### TABLE 5.10
DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS: NAGA-KUKI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Centroids:</th>
<th>Naga</th>
<th>Kuki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.697</td>
<td>0.541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difference between Group Centroids: 1.138

Eigenvalue: 0.379

Degree of Separation (Rao's V): 161.3

Chi-square ($\chi^2$): 133.90

Level of Significance: 0.0001

Variables which contribute to Standardized Discrimination Function Coefficients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Literates</td>
<td>Percent Literates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Nearest Town</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Cultivators</td>
<td>Percent Area under Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Agricultural Laborers</td>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Household Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Workers in Non-Primary Sector</td>
<td>Net Sown Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Service</td>
<td>Educational Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Area under Jhum</td>
<td>Village Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Facilities</td>
<td>Percent Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable Land per Person</td>
<td>Source of Drinking Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.7
category. The trait that most of these villages share is a very high level of literacy among both males and females. Literacy, however, is not the only criterion for allocation to the Naga group because literacy and female literacy are only two in a combination of eighteen variables used in the discrimination procedure.

SUMMARY

Statistical testing of the different ethnic groups confirmed that on the basis of the indicators of socio-economic development significant differences exist between the tribals and the Meiteis, and the Meiteis and the Nepalis. Neither MANOVA, nor discriminant analysis, however, brought out any significant differences between the tribals and the Nepalis. This lack of differentiation is partly a result of the limitations of the census data. Many of the villages, although dominantly Nepali, also contain a tribal component which dilutes the pure Nepali archetype.

The analyses did not show the Naga and the Kuki groups to be significantly different from each other on the basis of the discriminant analysis, thus confirming the homogeneity of the category "tribal."
The focus of this study has been on how the processes of socio-economic change are expressed spatially in varying patterns of development, and how these forces have differentially affected the different ethnic groups in Manipur. I have interpreted these differences in terms of their historical evolution, and their consequences in the contemporary situation. The meso-scale investigation adopted in the present study has sought to combine an understanding of the spatial variations, normally the domain of macro-level analyses, with an insight into some of the complex relationships between human groups and their environments which is permitted by micro-level studies.

Using simple statistical and cartographic techniques I have mapped and described the spatial variations in levels of development as revealed by certain indicators extracted from the 1971 Census data. The maps show that a fairly distinct disparity in levels of development exists between the hills and the valley. The differences, especially in landuse practices and agricultural techniques, are partly the result of differences in local ecology. While wet-rice cultivation is the dominant activity of the inhabitants of the
Manipur valley, swidden agriculture, with some exceptions, is the major subsistence activity in the hills.

The two different ecological settings, the hills and the valley, correspond with the two major ethnic territories, the tribal and the Meitei. The cartographic representations of differences in the levels of development between the two regions, therefore, also reflect ethnic differences. These differences are also substantiated by statistical analyses performed on the data. The multivariate analysis of variance reveals that, on the basis of the selected indicators of development, significant differences exist among the three major ethnic groups in Manipur, the tribals, the Meiteis, and the Nepalis. The subsequent procedure of discriminant analysis used to identify how the selected variables combine to distinguish one group from another shows that the Nepalis and the tribals are quite distinct from the Meiteis, but the discriminatory variables are not able to distinguish too well between the tribals and the Nepalis. This lack of differentiation can be explained in two ways--one, that both these groups share a similar ecological setting and are thus similar to each other; and two, that the census data fail to distinguish the tribal component in many dominantly Nepali villages which dilutes the pure Nepali archetype. Although the adoption of wet-rice cultivation in intermontane valleys and on terraced fields is a recent phenomenon over most of the hill region, terraced wet-rice cultivation among the tribals (notably the Maos, and some of the other Naga groups) in the hills north of the valley dates back at least a few centuries. This more intensive form of agriculture
probably evolved as a result of the pressure caused by large agglomerations of human populations in single villages in response to the requirement for effective defense among these constantly warring headhunters.

Population pressure often leads to the adoption of more intensive agricultural techniques (Boserup 1965). Swidden, or jhum, is an ecologically sound agricultural system only if the area under cultivation during a cropping cycle is a small proportion of the total area available for cultivation. Some increase in population can be sustained by increasing the area under cultivation and by shortening the fallow period, but when the population exceeds the carrying capacity of the land, environmental degradation sets in, and the stable cyclical equilibrium breaks down (Conklin 1959; Geertz 1963; Gourou 1966). The concept of a critical limit is rejected by some geographers such as Clarke (1977), who argue that carrying capacity should be perceived as a gradient, with any change in population along this gradient resulting in a corresponding environmental change. Historically, agricultural development may be seen as a series of attempts to increase the carrying capacity of the available land to cope with increasing population pressure (Wilkinson 1973).

The rapid growth of population in Manipur seems, to some extent, to be a function of accessibility. Population has grown very rapidly in well connected areas such as along the Imphal-Dimapur highway, north of the Manipur valley; along the Imphal-Moreh highway; in the Khuga valley around the Churachandpur township; and in the
Barak basin. These are the areas where several new settlements have sprung up in the past two decades. A shortage of land in both the hills and the valley has driven tribals and Meiteis into these more accessible areas. Most of the Nepali and other immigrants, too, have tended to settle in these areas well connected by roads.

Competition for land and resources in the newly settled and densely populated areas around the central valley is very intense. Because different ethnic groups occupy the same ecological niche, the relative size of each group significantly affects the other groups. Each niche, at a given level of technology, would have a certain carrying capacity which would limit the absolute size of the population dependent on it. The growth in size of each group, therefore, threatens the economic well-being of the other groups. In such a situation the concepts and feelings of "we" and "they" crystallize and harden, and the creation and maintenance of ethnic boundaries occurs.

Accessibility and geographical proximity to an urban center appear to be important factors affecting differences in exposure to the forces of change. The major clusters of development in Manipur, therefore, occur around Imphal; north of the valley along the Imphal-Dimapur highway; and around Churachandpur town in the hills southwest of the valley. A weak cluster of development also occurs around the subdivisional headquarter of Jiribam in the Barak valley. Even though this administrative headquarter is not an urban center, it is connected by a national highway with Silchar, a major town less than fifty miles away in the Surma valley of Assam. Churachandpur,
which was classified as a town only in 1971, was able to achieve this status because of its favorable location with respect to the transport network. Uneven development in space is thus largely a result of differences in accessibility.

These four clusters of development may be considered equivalent to Perroux's "growth poles", where development processes are most active, and their manifestation most intense. That these clusters exert a strong centripetal force resulting in a "backwash" effect is evident from the rapid population growth that has occurred in these areas during the recent past. Theoretically, these should also be centers of diffusing impulses of development to the periphery, but the "spread" effect seems limited. Also, powerful interest groups have emerged at these nodal positions who are able to regulate and control the means of redistribution of scarce resources. Since the decline of mayang power in recent years, the power groups in the central valley and the Barak basin, are now composed of the Meitei, but in the northern foothills the Nepalis are becoming increasingly powerful both economically and politically. Individuals belonging to different tribal groups are in positions of control in the Churachandpur area.

Differences in the levels of development in Manipur are also the result of government policy. After the establishment of administrative control over northeast India, the British adopted a policy of noninterference towards the tribal areas. They let the tribals run their affairs along traditional lines as long as they paid their taxes regularly. The only major intervention in tribal affairs was
the prohibition of headhunting and the suppression of intervillage warfare (Fürer-Haimendorf 1967). Some of the anthropologically oriented British administrators, such as Hutton and Mills, advocated a policy of protection of the tribals against exploitation by outsiders by keeping their habitats inaccessible.

Most of the Indian political elite criticized such a policy of isolation and protection because, in their opinion, it would lead to the creation of "anthropological zoos" and prevent the integration of the tribal people with the rest of the Indian population. The Constitution of independent India sought to end this policy of segregation and isolation by granting special privileges to the tribals in an attempt to draw them into the mainstream of Indian life. These included the reservation of a certain proportion of jobs, scholarships and admissions to educational institutions, and seats in the state and national legislatures for the tribal people, and by allocating special funds for the extension of roads, medical and educational facilities, agriculture extension projects and credit societies, and other infrastructural amenities in the tribal areas. As a part of the Five Year Plans for the development of the country as a whole, the nontribal areas of Manipur, too, received attention. Consequently, the disparity between the hills and the valley, and the tribals and the Meiteis, has slowly been narrowing.

Development in the hills has, however, been quite tardy and some parts of the hills remain virtually untouched by change. This is because the people responsible for disbursing the funds meant for the development of tribal areas are mainly the low-ranking Meitei
officials of the state government at Imphal, most of whom resent these special funds and thus either misappropriate them or allow them to lapse. The higher-ranking civil servants and administrators are mainly non-Manipuris, most of whom view their posting to this far-flung corner of India as a punishment. They spend much of their time and effort flying back and forth to New Delhi trying to negotiate postings closer to home, and are therefore not really concerned with the way their subordinates manage the affairs of the state. The tribal legislators, too, have their vested interests and try to appropriate as much of the funds as they can for the development of their own constituency, and especially their own village. During the past two decades, however, the volatile political situation has resulted in frequent dissolutions of the legislative assembly. During their short period in power the legislators can not accomplish much, and that is probably a reason why infrastructural amenities appear so haphazardly distributed in the hills.

Not only is development unevenly distributed in space and among the different ethnic groups, there are also marked disparities within individual ethnic groups, tribes, and even villages. This is the result of the emergence of elite or power groups who appropriate most of the benefits for themselves and prevent their diffusion through the entire community. This is especially the case with higher education and the coveted jobs in the civil service. The second generation of tribal youth whose parents were educated at some of the best institutions of higher learning in the country, or who got civil service jobs through the reserved quota because of their
tribal status, are now taking the same route rather than competing for the unreserved positions. Because of their ability to earn money outside their village, the tribal elite can afford to buy more land and build wet-rice terraces which many of the other villagers are not able to do. It is often members of such families who also enter politics and get elected as village councilmen and state legislators, thereby wielding more influence and control.

The perception of these disparities, however, is much stronger between rather than within the different ethnic groups. The growing competition over the traditional productive resource--land--as well as over access to jobs, and to positions of power and control, is leading to the strengthening of ethnic identities and hardening of attitudes. The real and perceived threats of economic exploitation by other ethnic groups have resulted in realignments of various subgroups within the broader ethnic categories. For example, a number of tribes have combined to assert their Naga or Kuki identities to increase their power and influence at one level, thus underplaying the earlier differences among themselves. At a still higher level such broader groups as the Naga and the Kuki have combined to assert their "tribal" identity against other major ethnic groups, Meitei, the Nepali, and the mayang. The polarization of ethnic identities resulting from a strong desire to preserve and enhance their economic well-being while competing with other groups for scarce resources is being expressed in the outbreak of hostilities between the different ethnic groups.
Assertion of ethnicity and tribalism in Manipur is, thus, largely an emergent phenomenon. The main function of boundary maintenance is to distinguish one group from another. The situation thus corresponds much more closely with Barth's (1969) utilitarian view of ethnic ascription, where individuals consciously seek and state membership in a particular group. The opposing view of Devereaux (1975) and DeVos (1975) claims that ethnic boundaries are a result of commitment to a group because of a common origin and heritage, or what Alverson (1979) termed the "primordial sentiment"—a psychological commitment, which people cling to even in the face of adversity, does not apply in the case of Manipur.

Despite the passage of thirty seven years since India gained independence, Manipur remains peripheral to Indian cultural and political space. Increasing dependence on the center, or the seat of political authority at New Delhi, for services and decisions affecting the people of Manipur, has intensified this feeling of peripherality. Government policies aimed at integrating this outlying state with the rest of the country have failed. The special privileges reserved for their neighbors have alienated the Meiteis. Their rejection of Hinduism, and revival of the old Sanamahi religion is a reaction to the perceived neglect by the Hindu majority in power. The tribals, on the other hand, resent the role of the Meiteis in trying to prevent the development of the tribal areas, and also the government apathy. The feeling that special tribal policies exist only to appease their separatist and secessionist desires further intensifies the centrifugal tendencies (Roy 1981). The
apparent unwillingness of the government to quell the massive influx of Nepali immigrants into Manipur has further alienated the native population of Manipur. The people of the state are, thus, consciously rejecting attempts being made to integrate them into the larger cultural and political entity of India.
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Date of Examination:

October 22, 1984